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1997 SPECIAL GAMES GUIDE INSIDE!



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Issue 52

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Taking L.S.D. can make you panic and even lead to a permanent change of personality.
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WIN OUR COVER GIRLS! (Sort of...)

A VERITABLE AM ANNEX FULL OF PRIZES!

WIN LOADS OF TOP SEGA GEAR!

Yes, just too late for Christmas, Sega has stumped up loads of exclusive merchandise for us to give away. Most of the prizes have a distinctly AM2 flavour and there are so many of them that we've had to split them up into four separate 'bundles'. By answering a simple question, you can enter for any of the four prize collections. Send your entry on a postcard or sealed down envelope, indicating which prizes you want to enter for to: Bundles of Joy, Mean Machines Sega, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. So without further ado, the four sets of prizes are as follows...



BUNDLE A: "TOYS"

One Japanese Virtua Fighter or Fighting Vipers toy picked at random from the lovely ladies featured on the cover, a copy of the superlative Virtua Cop 2 and a copy of the top notch Daytona USA CCE. In addition to this, five runners up will each win a copy of Daytona USA CCE.

BUNDLE B: "TAT"

A Virtua Fighter comic, a Virtua Fighter jigsaw, a French (?!) copy of Dragonball Z for the Saturn (possibly the only one in the country) and a copy of the original Sonic game on the Megadrive signed by its creator Yuji Naka.



THE $64 MILLION QUESTION:

What is Candy's name in the Japanese version of Fighting Vipers?

BUNDLE C: "STRICTLY PC"

Five Sega PC titles to give away including Daytona USA, Virtua Cop, Virtua Fighter, BUG! and Baku Baku Animal. The lucky winner will walk away with all five games.



BUNDLE D: "CLOBBER"

There's an exclusive Virtua Cop 2 bomber jacket up for grabs plus 2 Virtua Fighter T-shirts and a stylish blue Sonic Team record bag. And, as if that wasn't enough, we'll chuck in a copy of Virtua Cop 2 as well. Huzzah!

FINE PRINT!

1) The closing date for entries is 29th January 1997.
2) The competition is not open to employees of EMAP Images Ltd. or Sega Enterprises or their families.
3) The Editor's decision is final.
4) Winners will be picked from the correct entries only.

CONTENTS

You might have taken it easy over Christmas but we've been looking ahead to '97, bringing you more game options than you could possibly afford. Copious amounts of review text too, the Good, the Bad and the Ugly, as ever.

HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL FEATURE!


FEATURE
1997 GAMES
SPRING
MANX TT
FIGHTERS MEGAMIX
ENEMY ZERO
WILD NINES
DIE HARD ARCADE
HERC'S ADVENTURES
MICRO MACHINES V3
HEART OF DARKNESS

1997 SATURN GAMES GUIDE

All our sources have been scoured to their copper bottoms to reveal the layout of next year's release schedules. An absolutely massive list of confirmed titles is spread out over seven seasonal pages.

REVIEWS



THE GREAT SEGA TRIVIA

For the first time ever, we set you the ultimate test of Sega knowledge. Questions of the utmost obscurity: What is the name of the dragon in Panzer Dragoon? But the answers are printed elsewhere.

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The MEAN MACHINES CHARTER
1. Definitely no wrapping paper

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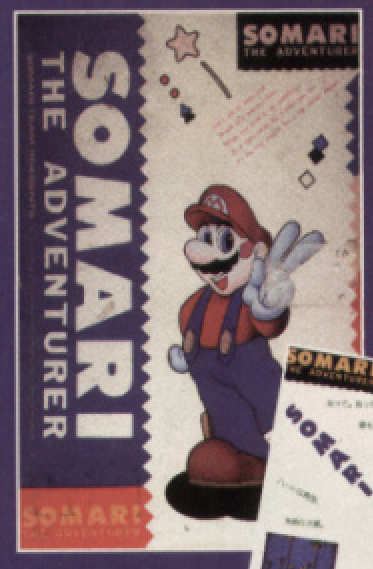
MEAN MACHINES SEGA



This month we spill the beans on the biggest prospect for Saturn owners in 1997. Not just an enhanced version of Virtua Fighter 3 but the promise of arcade-close or even perfect conversions using the power of the mysterious new cartridge booster. 'Model 3' performance is what we're promised and hopefully this time Sega will deliver. Any honest Saturn owner knows that it's cosmetics more than anything else that has made the battle with PlayStation mostly an uphill one. 'Graphics tarts' they may be, but Sega now wants the mass market of gamesplayers, who don't just want the inner beauty of games like Fighting Vipers, they want skin deep attractiveness too.
The most promising factor about this project is the way Sega intends to sell it. Packaging the game with VF3 will make it an irresistible buy to MILLIONS of Saturn owners, and provide a healthy market for future releases like Supercar. From there the possibilities are endless – third parties could see a large enough user base to develop without having the cost of the cartridge. But as we know nothing of the hardware, we can only wait to see exactly what its spec is. Sega has to get this right, and whereas Mega CD, 32X and even Saturn raise certain questions on their hardware development, I think times have moved on. The AM divisions are producing the best arcade hardware in the world. Sega is using its connections with manufacturers of PC accelerator cards, and has a more focussed idea of what hardware is required to do (the Saturn was developed to cover all bases: 2D and 3D). If Sega gets it right, we get games better than PSX or N64 at CD prices. I think Sega can do it. This time, I really think Sega can do it.

GUS

IT'S A SCANDAL!





Don't sit there and waste your precious time. When you want to do something Do it right away. Do it when you can. It's the only way to live a life without regrets.

Since the beginning of Sega and Nintendo rivalry, the prospect everyone was most appalled, intrigued and enthralled by was a Mario game on Megadrive, or a Sonic game on Super Nintendo. It never happened. Until now. But it isn't Sega or Nintendo that has dreamt up the abomination that is 'Somari the Adventurer', the shambling love child of Mario running around a grotesque parody of the first Sonic the Hedgehog game. This bizarre NES game is the work of the notorious Hong Kong pirates. In that incredible capital of Capitalism, hackers reign supreme and nobody bothers to buy legitimate games. Despite being horrible, illegal, and having a high probability of shagging your NES (if you're still unfortunate to have a working one) Somari is one of the most interesting oddities for us to come across in some time. We'll put it in our Black Museum, next to the likes of Dark Castle. A little bit of gaming history.

THE GIRLIE SHOW

Following on from our adorable female fighters cover, the team let you in on their deepest female alter-ego fantasies.

GUS



"I would choose to be Jane. Mainly because I would be able to use all the combat trousers and T-shirts in my present wardrobe, and I would never have to go shopping again. Jane doesn't look the shopping type. I would like to be able to smear my opponents against fences like Marmite, Jane-style."
FAVE GAMES:Red Alert (PC), Virtua Cop 2

MATT



"I'd like to be Grace, as I've yearned to be a skate dude. I also secretly love tight spiral-curl perms. People would think I was Sinitta and I'd make a mint doing the pantomime season. It'd also be nice to have replacements for my Fisher Price safety skates.
FAVE GAMES:Fighters Megamix, XMas NiGHTS, Star Wars

JASON



"There is no contest — Candy! I have a Candy fixation, and I've been trying to order one of those Candy PVC dresses, so far without success. My girly hair is long enough to put in bunches, really it is! . Candy's a tart and so am I."
FAVE GAMES:Red Alert (PC), Fighting Vipers, Sonic 6

NICK



"Sarah springs to mind, although she scares me. I wouldn't try to chat her up in the pub, because she'd probably get annoyed, do a backflip and spill glasses everywhere. Then I'd have to apologise and buy everyone a round.
FAVE GAMES:Sega Rally, Tomb Raider, Quake on Saturn

STE



"I would be Pai, the one everyone else has left out. Simply because she lives in China and there would be a plentiful supply of Chinese food. But then again, I'd probably express an opinion about the government and end up in a forced labour campmaking cheap plastic action figures. Isn't life a drag?"
FAVE GAMES:Red Alert (PC), Virtua Cop 2, Puzzle Fighter 2



Meanwhile down at the SHOCK BUSTERS...
This'll do the trick...
REVENGE of the CHICKEN Blood VAMPIRE
Norm's the name, sensible viewing's the game. Watch that and you'll turn into a zombie!
This is what I call in-home entertainment. There's no gore, no harsh language and no bimbos.
LEARN CHESS. with Ivor Pawn
CRUNCH!
CRUNCH!
Horror movies are bad for your telly— they'll give it nightmares!
CRUNCH!
Later that evening...
Now this is what I call in-home entertainment.
TWIX
a BREAK FROM THE NORM

NEWS

For this month's news we went straight to the top and cornered Sega UK's Director of Marketing and Sales. What followed was frank, informative and exclusive, to say the least.



TALKING WITH MR BIG



Andy Mee is Sega Europe's decision maker when it comes to Saturn. As Director of Marketing and Sales, he is quite an industry figure, moving from the television side of Hitachi to Sega. He's renowned for plain-speaking and his colourful descriptions of Sega's competition. He graciously took time out from the busiest period of the year to answer MEAN MACHINES frankly on Virtua Fighter 3, Saturn 2, the Sonic Extreme fiasco and more...

GUS: What has pleased you most about 1996?

ANDY MEE: I think hitting our budget, from a purely commercial point of view, as well as the fact that people are starting to turn round and say 'Oh yeah, Saturn is better than PlayStation'. It's something we've known all along but found difficult to get other people convinced of it. The major retailers now coming back and saying 'yeah, we think it's better'. Other highlights include a couple of the software titles, like Worldwide Soccer, which we were particularly pleased with.

GUS: Did that come as a surprise after the original?

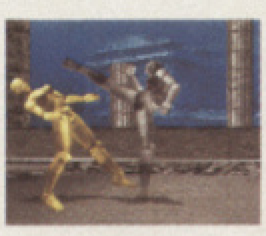
MEE: To be honest, yes. We were sitting here this time last year when it was called International Victory Goal 2, and we were thinking "oh-oh." And we had the Euro '96 license so we thought we'd concentrate on that, and just put this one out later. Then we saw the first playable and thought — Wow! What pleased us even more was that we were able to assign a producer here to work with Japan, so we got Gary Bloom for the commentary etc. The other highlight was the Bike team*, who did really well.

*Sega sponsored the 1996 Team Sega Suzuki of Niall Mackenzie and Jim Moodie. Mackenzie tied on points with the winner of the British Bike Championship.

GUS: After this year, how do you react to people who say Saturn is never going to catch up with PlayStation?

MEE: I think we realise now that there will probably be a greater installed base of PlayStations. But as long as we've gone ahead and met our budgets and targets, which we have done — we said a million units by end of the financial year and we're on target — we have a viable business to go forward. Granted, Sony has sold more, but it's spent more on advertising. Also, when we have a look at some of the users we've lost, Sega users who might have switched camps after the experience of 32X or Mega-CD. Nobody really gave us credit for at least having a go with these formats to try and broaden the games market, they unfortunately came at a 'boom-and-bust' period of the market when everyone thought that things would shoot up and continue to shoot up. For our sins, we didn't support it as much as we should have done, and with that you begin to get a bit of distrust. We lost some of these, and you can also take account of some Nintendo owners who are fed up waiting for N64. At lot of them saw gaming as a 'Sega or Nintendo' thing, and have gone to Sony rather than come to us.



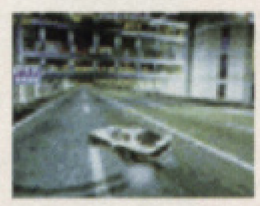




GUS: There's news that Saturn sales in America have rocketed by 500% over Thanksgiving with the inclusion of the three free game pack. Are there plans to do that here?

MEE: That's right. They sold 300,000 pieces in a week. Which was an incredible phenomenon for them. We will have to look at the evolution of the market, and it is suggested that 32 bit will follow 16 bit; as the pricepoint comes down you attract a wider audience, and I think the mass market wants value for money. They're not just buying it for the hardware. We're looking at product packs for next year but I'm not going to reveal what we're going to do now. You can look to some of the older titles, now they have recouped their development costs.





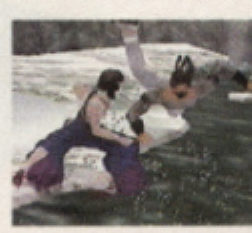
"The idea is we will have some form of cartridge that will slot into the back and allow you to play Virtua Fighter 3."

GUS: Talking of the older titles, have you got any plans for a budget range?

MEE: At the moment we are not planning any re-releases, though this year we have made some of our classic titles; Rally, VF2 and the original Cop; available for retailers to do pack bundles. Maybe next season we're looking to do collections, two or three products together or where we can, combine them on one disc.

GUS: Why was Sonic Extreme canned?

MEE: It wasn't good enough. It's as simple as that. One of the things we've learned since the launch of Saturn is that we've let some people down with the quality of our titles. Looking back to things like Virtual Hydlide and Mansion of Hidden Souls, there were a few titles that perhaps we wouldn't have wanted. Extreme didn't come up to scratch, and if the game isn't good enough, we shouldn't release it, really. Sonic 3D will be released on 14th February and the conversion from Megadrive to Saturn has got a few nice tweaks to it — particularly the bonus stages — and that was deemed by Yuji Naka to be better than Sonic Extreme. At the end of the day, Naka still makes the decisions regarding what happens to Sonic, and he oversaw the writing of the bonus stages for the Saturn version, and it was he who said that Extreme wasn't good enough. It was even harder for him because it was an STI (Sega Technical Institute) project, which was where he was when the original Sonic was done.



OUT NOW

VIRTUA COP 2

SEGA

One of the most spot-on arcade conversions we've seen, and a triumph for AM2. Buy it now. With the gun, preferably.

OVERALL 94%





GUS: But Sonic 3D isn't as innovative and doesn't have the character of the early Sonic games, does it?
MEE: I can understand that point of view, and personally, it's not what we would have wanted. You go so far down the development of a game believing it will be what we are all expecting, and when it doesn't cut it, you have to make a contigency plan. By converting Sonic 3D and adding extra graphics and bonus stages, was at least offering Sonic on Saturn.
We're told that the Sonic game for next season, September or October, which Naka is personally involved with, will be the Sonic game we are all hoping and expecting. I'm not going to sit here and say: "No, you've got it all wrong, Sonic 3D's what we wanted for Saturn", because it isn't. It's a compromise we're not trying to cover up but it's still a good game.
GUS: The Heart of Darkness deal: is it on?
MEE: (Laughter) I don't know. I don't suppose anyone really does! If Heart of Darkness gets completed it will be released on the Saturn. The original deal on the release date has passed, so that agreement is no longer as it was. We are in constant discussion with Virgin over it, because at the end of the day it's a beautiful-looking title. What I've seen running on a Saturn is awesome, the problem is there's lots of fantastic-looking areas, but there's just not one game there yet. There are some very clever people producing it but sometimes you've just got to say 'today's the day, boys. Get it done'.



"Touring Cars will be converted in Japan by the team that converted Virtual On."

GUS: Are there more plans for third-party deals?
MEE: Yes. We've had some cracking success this year. Tomb Raider is by far the best but Exhumed is also worthy of note and still, in my opinion, better than Doom. But Tomb Raider shows that not only can we negotiate third-party deals but by arranging a window of exclusivity, Saturn owners were able to play it first. And that's the kind of deal we've got four or five of in the pot for next year. I can't reveal more.

GUS: The one everyone is talking about is Quake.
MEE: Ah yes, Quake. Quake will appear for Saturn early next year. It's code release* is February. But it's a little bit difficult to get details. In the Quake deal there are basically three titles that will come to us; Quake, Duke Nukem and Soulstorm.
* Code release refers to the first finalised version of the game shown to Sega for approval, not retail release.

GUS: When I mentioned Saturn Quake to GT Interactive, they laughed.
MEE: I can assure you they are definitely confirmed and we have signed contracts.

GUS: Have you seen them?
MEE: No.

GUS: I thought Quake might have something to do with the Netlink, as Quake has established itself as the foremost Internet multi-player game.
MEE: In Europe we're very much looking at the logistics behind the Netlink. I still believe we've got to find a way to bring it out. At the moment, it's success in America and Japan has been quite limited, due to the lack of software support. And I am of the firm opinion — and at the moment it is my decision not to bring it in — because I can't give a full catalogue of games it's going to be compatible with. I'll go back to the quote I've used internally since 32X 'don't bring in a hardware peripheral until you've got the software to support it'.
At the moment in the States you're asking almost double on top of a Saturn for a Web browser. Now, while that may have some place in the market, it's not enough of a mass-market product to bring it in and launch it properly. Until we can see there are X software titles and they're good ones, with a minimum of point-to-point gaming, we won't bring it in... My belief is that until there is some kind of established server structure in place that we can make compatible with our consoles, it still is a bit old-fashioned. There still is basic latency* involved in point-to-point gaming technology that makes games like beat-'em-ups very difficult to do.







*Latency is the jargon term for the delay caused by the passing of data between the multiple PCs or consoles being used to host a multi-player game. The delay of a few milliseconds creates huge problems for fast reaction games like beat-'em-ups.





GUS: And the UK phone system is even slower than the US one.
MEE: That's right. Plus the whole concept of Internet gaming. It's this Holy Grail for people to come and present all these wonderful ideas but really at the moment the Internet is all these people running round trying to work out how they're going to make money out of it. Now the more people that log onto it, the slower it will get and therefore will not sustain the kind of gaming that we provide. It may sustain 300 people playing a war-game, or strategy game, but it will not sustain the sort of action gaming we do. It's not just the case of launching a little black box — I could do that next week — I want to make sure we have the support for it that the consumer deserves.

GUS: The alternative for multi-player gaming is the serial link cable. Isn't it quite disappointing that Sega hasn't got behind what is essentially a cheap way of offering multi-player gaming? We've heard of various projects; Magic Carpet, Command and Conquer, Doom; where they wanted to include a linkplay option, but said there was no support from Sega.
MEE: Well, Doom supports the serial port. The guys upstairs actually worked on Doom, and I think there are three or four more third-party titles that will support the cable. There is a fundamental question involved as well: how many of your readers will take a Saturn and a television round to their mates house to play link games? If there is enough, we will support it. It's the same commercial question it comes down to. I can get this cable in, package it and get it out to the retailers. What I wanted to do was bundle it with a game. I originally hoped that we might be able to do it with Doom.

"The Sonic game for next season... which Naka is personally involved with, is the Sonic game we're all hoping for and expecting."

GUS: But there can't be much commercial risk in launching a cable? Surely, there are greater risks involved in releasing items like the Mission Stick and Arcade Racer.
MEE: With respect, I decided not to release the Mission Stick here, and the Arcade Racer is supported by quite a few games and it makes sense if you're going to play driving games. It makes 'Rally a totally different experience. The connection cable — fine! I can bring in

VIRTUAL ON
SEGA



It won't appeal to everyone but if you're into big robot action with bucket loads of depth, you could do a hell of a lot worse than this.

OVERALL 92%

MADDEN NFL '97
EA



The best Madden game for years! Old potato head himself provides top entertainment for sports buffs and bluffers alike.

OVERALL 91%

COMMAND AND CONQUER
VIRGIN



This game has been responsible for the most lost office hours this month and that's about as close to a guarantee of quality as you can get.

OVERALL 90%

a couple of thousand in Japanese packaging and sell them through direct mail order here.

GUS: But it needs games.
MEE: Sure, that's the whole point.

GUS: But surely it's a 'chicken and egg' situation?
MEE: Sure, but now at least the development guys upstairs are working with some of the third-parties, and when I see some more games available, I'll release it. I still want the fundamental question answered of 'how many guys take a Saturn and television round to their mates house?'

GUS: Maybe our readers could help you with that.
MEE: Yeah, great. I'd love to hear from them.* Sometimes ivory tower decisions are the worst ones to make.
*Andy Mee, (Mean Machines) Sega Europe, 266-270 Gunnersbury Avenue, Chiswick, London
GUS: Why don't Sega do more UK development?
MEE: A lot of games have been developed in the UK, but we don't always talk about it. Sonic 3D was developed in the UK by a very talented group of people, and obviously Tomb Raider. We're in the process of looking for some other UK developers, and we'll be licensing in titles for next year to them.

GUS: But are there no plans to create an in-house development team?
MEE: No. At the moment there is enough talent in the UK particularly, and the way our new PD department is set up, the head producer will assign some of the local talent. I think an in-house team can perhaps not be so creative as when you sign up with partners playing off against each other, vying for the business.

"I've not gone on the record that often attacking PlayStation consumers, but a lot of them are just graphics tarts..."

GUS: What about UK developers playing off for conversions of Sega coin-ops? We've heard reps from Sega R&D have made some visits.
MEE: Touring Cars will be converted in Japan by the team that converted Virtual On. Also, AM Annexe will assign one of their team to supervise the conversion. Tetsuya-san was here last week and definitely confirmed that. Sky Target is still questionable and Gunblade is also questionable. However, on balance Gunblade will probably be converted because there is enough that can be done to make it a consumer game. It's a great arcade game because you've got a dirty great big gun that gives you a lot of feedback. As a console game, all you do is keep your finger on the C button. There's not enough enough depth in the game at the moment to make it a consumer product. But we are definitely looking at that. The same can be said of Sky Target. It's not one that has been definitely confirmed but it is one we are asking for. But the big news is that Sega has confirmed we will have Virtua Fighter 3.

GUS: Which is my next question. Will you state whether this game will have some form of hardware upgrade?
MEE: It will. It has to have some form of graphics emulator. The Saturn is close to creating Model 3 graphics but it can't do it at the moment. So the idea is we will have some form of cartridge that will slot into the back and allow you to play Virtua Fighter 3. And the conversions afterwards.

GUS: So it will be a generic device wich works with future games?
MEE: Yes. The way we will market it is as Virtua Fighter 3. What we will not do is offer it as a peripheral separately. We aim to reduce the cost to the consumer for the software element to make the package commercially viable.

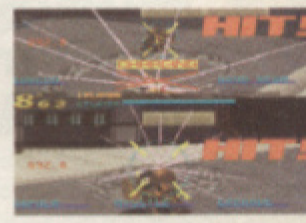


GUS: How much are we looking at?
MEE: We are confident we can get it at the price of a third-party Nintendo 64 title.

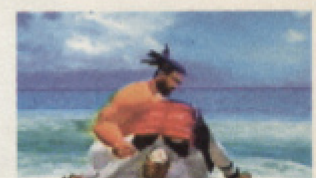
GUS: Around £80?
MEE: Less than that, hopefully.

GUS: And this upgrade will offer Model 3 performance?
MEE: Yes. It will be able to reproduce Virtua Fighter 3 and also other Model 3 titles, like Supercar hopefully.

GUS: Will you be licensing out the technology to third-parties?
MEE: That is a subject under discussion. It would effectively be giving them access to Model 3 technology.



GUS: There are a lot of Internet rumours about Saturn 2 being announced before the end of 1996. Are Sega working on a new hardware platform.
MEE: There will be no announcement, there is no hardware. Saturn has got years left in it, and is still early in its cycle in Britain. Of course, Sega is looking to the next generation, but now is not the time to release details of a future hardware platform. We have the view that in ten years time the shape of video game entertainment will be radically different.



GUS: And are you confident of Sega's position here in the UK?
MEE: We're a leaner and fitter operation, and from this base we're growing. It's looking a lot better this year as it did same time last year.



GUS: So you don't expect some sort of PlayStation landslide over Christmas?
MEE: They're installing not-quite-3 to 1. But the thing I'm totally confident about is that we're installing Saturns with gamers who know what they're talking about. I've not gone on the record that often attacking PlaySstation consumers but a lot of them are just graphics tarts who see something that looks good without thinking they're going to play though it in a day and be bored with it. A lot of our consumers know damn well what they're going to get... Even if they continue to install three times as many, as long as we have a discerning market of gamers who want to be challenged, that is what we will continue to deliver to them.

GUS: How many releases do you expect next year?
MEE: We released 36 first-party titles this year (1996) and I expect there to be much the same, 30-35, next year. Third-party titles — who knows? I could show you a list with a hundred-plus now.



GUS: Andy, thanks for taking time out for this interview.

SALES CHART: SATURN

The top ten best selling Saturn games this month as compiled by Chart Track:

1 (-) Virtua Cop 2 (Sega)
2 (2) Worldwide Soccer '97 (Sega)
3 (1) Tomb Raider (Eidos)
4 (-) Daytona USA CCE (Sega)
5 (-) Command & Conquer (Virgin)
6 (-) Actua Golf (Gremlin)
7 (3) Fighting Vipers (Sega)
8 (5) NiGHTS (Sega)
9 (9) Sega Rally (Sega)
10 (8) Destruction Derby (Psygnosis)

OFFICE CHART

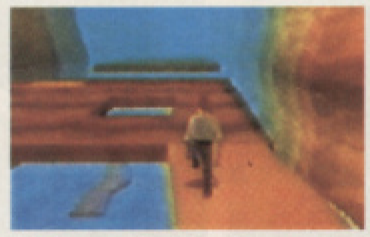
It's hard to believe we've had any time to play games this month but somehow both Gus and Steve managed it:

1 (-) Command & Conquer: Red Alert (Virgin)
2 (-) Die Hard Trilogy (Fox)
3 (-) Dark Saviour (Sega)
4 (1) Tomb Raider (Core)
5 (-) Fighting Vipers (Sega)

RATTLESNAKE RED







After last month's little fiasco (it was a late night okay?) here's the Rattlesnake Red piece we SHOULD have run. Acclaim is revealing that it has more than enough dry powder to strike back in 1997 with these EXCLUSIVE first pics of Rattlesnake Red, a promising new platformer from Sculptured Software. Rattlesnake Red appears to be the rugged hero of the piece, set in Colorado desert-style canyons complete with critters. We saw an early demo in action which gave a clear impression of the game being an answer to Mario 64 on Saturn. Set in fast-moving, open-plan 3D environments with complete freedom to run, Red must explore and climb to higher levels. Cool fading effects are used to bring in distant scenery. Red uses a spade to clout enemies and dynamite to move around the larger elements of scenery, which leads to some nifty polygon manipulation. Adding to the Mario-esque feel is a remote camera for manual positioning, as the game skips between into the screen sections and complex platform 'walls'. These pics are all of the first level, one of five massive areas, including mines and river rapids. Acclaim is looking for Red to roll sometime late spring.



Rattlesnake Red. Release: May '97. Publisher: Acclaim

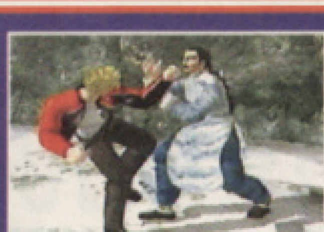
DIGITAL DANCE MIX



AM2 have revealed details of their latest Saturn game, although any of you expecting a new Virtua Cop or 3D beat-'em-up will be somewhat disappointed. Digital Dance Mix stars one of Japan's biggest pop stars, Namie Amuro, in what can only be described as a concert sim. Two of her hits are available to choreograph, and as the polygonised personality gyrates away on stage, the player gets to choose the set, change Namie's clothes and also has complete control over the camera 'filming' the concert. The 'game' uses the Saturn's high resolution mode, so it should look stunning, but we reckon Digital Dance Mix has about a 0.005% chance of coming out in this country.

Digital Dance Mix. Available: January (Japan) Developer: AM2





SEGAWORLD CHART

The top five coin-guzzlers at Sega's premiere amusement centre this month are:

1 (-) VIRTUA FIGHTER 3
2 (3) X MEN vs STREET FIGHTER
3 (2) SEGA RALLY
4 (-) SONIC FIGHTERS
5 (5) VIRTUAL ON

JUDGMENT FORCE





These are the first exclusive pictures of Core's Judgment Force, a beat-'em-up project from the two aces behind Thunderhawk 2. Six months of development has already yielded an astonishingly solid and free-moving virtual world in which baddies wear smart suits and rent expensive offices.

We know that for a time, Sega and Core flirted with the idea of making this Streets of Rage for Saturn (such is the quality of the game engine) but when that idea lapsed, Core had to come up with their own profiles for the four player characters. The two playable fighters at the moment are Mace and Hawk. Mace is definitely Blaze for the Nineties, a martial arts kicking expert with raven hair and licence-to-kill kinky boots. Hawk is in many ways like SOR's Axel, and will probably lead an attempt to bring padded body warmers back into fashion. Each character will have 40-50 moves, perhaps including some collaborative attacks to get the most out of the two-player mode.

Judgment Force is best described as a 'scrolling' beat-'em-up, though the scenes move, more accurately, in all directions through a virtual world. The initial look is similar to Sega's Die Hard arcade game but whereas that only allows you to move in two planes, Judgment Force offers far greater freedom of movement and use of the camera. However, elements like weapons to be picked up and used, including guns, are common to both games.



In Judgment Force you will be able to select routes, visiting a different arrangement of the 15 levels each time. At the moment, only the first of these, the tower block is in a playable form. Variety will be a key ingredient, both in setting and action. Already, a battle on a submarine is planned, as well as a trip into space and fights with helicopters.

Judgment Force is one of the most stimulating projects for 1997 and the next set of details will come first to MEAN MACHINES for a detailed first look.

Judgment Force. Release: Autumn '97. Publisher: Core

Just wait until you play Judgment Force. It's awesome!

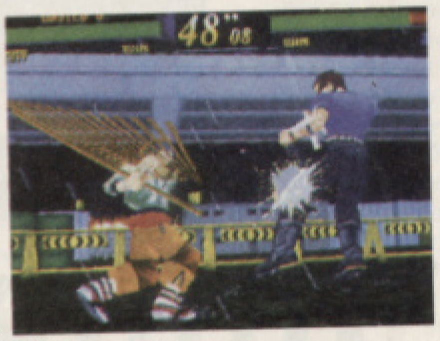
LAST BRONX

Sega has finally confirmed that AM3's hard-hitting Model 2 beat-'em-up, Last Bronx, will appear on Saturn. Although there are similarities between this arcade fighter and Tecmo's Dead or Alive (see last month's Arcadia for full details), all the characters in Last Bronx carry motion-blurring weapons. Each fighter therefore has a different reach providing plenty of variety as well as staggering multi-hit combos. AM3 should deliver a finished version to Sega of Japan before the Spring so don't expect a PAL translation until the Summer.









Last Bronx. Available: Spring '97 (Japan) Developer: AM3



READERS CHART

We need your vote! Fill in the coupon below and tell us exactly which games you rate this month:

1 (2) NiGHTS (Sega)
2 (1) Sega Rally (Sega)
3 (3) Virtua Fighter 2 (Sega)
4 (4) Tomb Raider (Eidos)
5 (-) Worldwide Soccer '97 (Sega)

COMPETITION!

WIN A STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT BOOK

To tie in with the release of the eighth Star Trek film, the Borg-packed 'First Contact', Titan Books has released a 'Making of' book at a very reasonable £8.99. Packed with exclusive photos, interviews and profiles of the cast, and a look behind the scenes with the ILM effects crew, the book is an indispensable guide to what could well be the hottest Star Trek flick yet! We have five copies of the book to give away, courtesy of Titan, and for a chance to win one, just select the correct answer to this question:

Which name was given to Captain Picard when he was assimilated by the Borg in the Next Generation TV series?

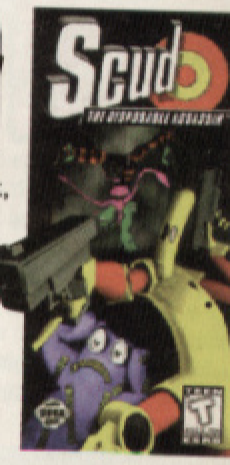
A: Locutus
B: Uhura
C: Nigel

Send your entry on a postcard or sealed down envelope to: **RESISTANCE IS FUTILE! Mean Machines Sega, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU**

Entries must reach us no later than 29th January 1997. Warp One, Engage!



SCUD



Based on the wacky comic book, created by the talented Rob Schrab, Scud: The Disposable Assassin is a crazy platform shoot-'em-up currently being developed by Segasoft in the US. The plot follows the madcap adventures of Scud, a unique assassin droid that self destructs upon completion of its mission.

Discovering that his life will end once he whacks his target, Scud decides to become a free agent and embarks on a variety of bizarre escapades. If you've read the comic you'll know just how hilarious Scud really is. Scud: The Disposable Assassin is due on Saturn early in the New Year so we'll try to get our hands on an import copy soon.

Scud: The Disposable Assassin. Available: 1st Qtr '97. Developer: Segasoft

JAPANESE CHART

Want to know what's hot in the land of the rising sun? The Japanese Chart gives you the lowdown on the top ten selling Saturn games in Japan:

セガ

1 (2) Lunar Silver Star Story
2 (-) The Legend of the Ogre Battle
3 (-) Samurai Spirits
4 (4) Langrissar 3
5 (3) Sakura Wars

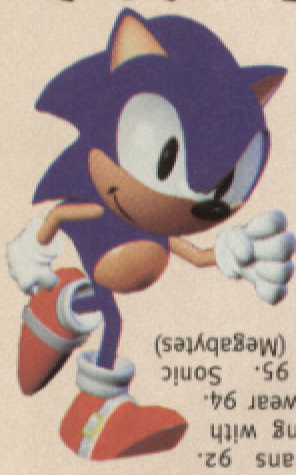
NEW COIN-OP

In its interview with Andy Mee MEAN MACHINES discovered that both AM3 and AM Annexe have new coin-op plans. AM3's plan is to recreate the buzz of Sega Rally using Model 3 technology. This coin-op sequel will have new features such as permanent track markings. Not only will tyres make troughs in the earth, but these will affect the dynamics of the course. The other title is a complete mystery but was borne out of discussions of original ideas for future AM coin-ops. Mindful of how driving, shooting and combat games might be seen to be formulaic, AM Annexe are working on a project due to be announced in the new year, promised to be innovative and 'revolutionary' in design and using Model 3 technology.



Model 3. Release: 1997. Developer: Sega/AM3/AM Annexe

TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS



1.Lagi 2. Riglord Saga 3. Janet Marshall 4. Yuji Naka 5. Tom Kalinske 6. Sega Rally 7. Nigel 8. Lara Croft 9. Akira 10. Jane 11. Green Hill Zone 12. NiGHTS 13. Fei Yen 14. AM3 15. Rameses II 16. She has a flashback 17. Daytona USA 18. Sonic the Hedgehog 19. Sarah Bryant 20. Castrol 21. Six 22. Sheng Long 23. General Kilbaba 24. Sarah Bryant 25. Qirex; Auricom; AG Systems; Feisar 26. J6 27. Model 1 28. Pepsiman 29. The Great Pyramid 30. Twin Seeds 31. Mana 32. Forty five 33. A cow 34. 35. Scotland 36. Sentinel 37. Forty 38. The Vorpal Blade 39. Aerosmith 40. Gilius Thunderblade 41. Snot 42. Primal Rage 43. Five years 44. NiGHTS 45. 100m dash 46. Flicky's Island 47. Mr Do! 48. Service Games? 49. Shinobi 50. Streets of Rage. 51. Bubble Bobble 52. BUG! 53. A gents' toilet 54. On scooters 55. Battleships - 3% 56. Armstone airport 57. Virtual On 58. King of Fighters '95 59. Zebras 60. A horse 61. Speedway 62. "Gentlemen, start your engines!" 63. Reala 64. Space Hulk 65. Moebius 66. Sega Worldwide Soccer '97 67. Eternal Champions 68. Ecco the Dolphin's 69. Theme Park 70. Motion Picture Expert Groups 71. Super Skidmarks 72. Creativity is Life 73. Night Trap 74. Panzer Dragoon 1&2 75. Clockwork Knight 76. Clockwork Knight 77. Dark Saviour 77. The Sega Virtual Processor 78. Worms 79. The island of Myst 80. Conrad Hart 81. Computer War, by Nolan Bushnell 82. With the Sega Channel 83. Panzer Dragoon 84. Yamaha 85. True — called Aquazone for Sega Saturn 86. Four 87. NiGHTS, Fighting Vipers, Worldwide Soccer, Daytona USA CCE 88. Dave Perry 89. Silver 90. Genesis 91. Bosses or Guardians 92. Robotika 93. Playing with Candy in her underwear 94. Olympic Games 95. Sonic Extreme 96. 650MB (Megabytes) 97. Pico 98. Role-playing game 99. France 100. Red and blue

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

96-100
As David Coleman would say — quite remarkable. You obviously have no life outside Sega, as you are able to recall the minutest details about games you don't even own, as well as all the technical stuff. You are a fountain of Sega wisdom. If you want to retain this awesome strike rate, you'd better get a subscription for next year.

80-95
The monicker 'expert' would not be misapplied to you, as the amount you know vastly outweighs the gaps in your knowledge. You probably choose your games wisely, so you have all the major releases and lap up every detail. We guess you're a loyal reader and would like you to stay that way.

60-79
Considering the obscurity of some questions, your score is quite an achievement. You have a firm grasp of Saturn gaming, although the real trivia is probably with your sphere of interest. What you do know will allow you to make good buying decisions.

40-59
Most regular readers will probably fall into this category. You may not have a large games library, and you are only really interested in a selection of games. Maybe the Megadrive is unknown territory or the technical side is of no interest. If you read future issues avidly, your score could double next year.

20-39
Hmm... bit of work required. You want to know more obviously — you bought MEAN MACHINES. If people talk about MPEGs or VDP1s you're at a bit of a loss, and the difference between AM2 and 3 passes you by. All is not lost, you clearly know a bit about Sega. New Saturn owners will see huge improvements in their score after an intensive magazine reading course.

19 OR LESS
Only the most talked about aspects of games sink into your memory, which is okay — you're probably more interested in having fun rather than getting a degree in games studies. You might want to feel like more of an enthusiast by picking up some facts about the Virtua Fighters and Tomb Raiders on the market.

FROM AM









GOSSIP SHORTS

New Year tidbits from the churning pot that is the Saturn market.

STATESIDE SURGE
First, the dramatic turnaround in America. Up until the Thanksgiving weekend in early December, Saturn sales had been okay but still trailing Sony. Sega America, under the new tougher direction of Shoichiro Irimajiri and Ted Hoff decided to bite the bullet and offer the $199 console with VF2, Sega Rally and Virtua Cop for free! The effect was dramatic and immediate — a sales increase of 500%.

DEATH IN VENICE
Last month we brought you news of Tomb Raider 2. Not that difficult to guess, was it? Anyone could have gambled on that. Well this month we are first again with some firm details. The development team consists of half the original team and new members, mainly to do the character and scenery design — Lara is going to look slightly different. The game engine will also be altered to create exterior scenes and also enhance the fighting aspect of the game — other types of weapons apart from guns are being looked at. All the locations will be different from the first game and we have two provisional settings already: Venice and the wreck of the Titanic!

OMERTA CORE
The Core of Silence is being observed by the Übergrüppencoder Toby Gard — the driving force behind Tomb Raider (which threatens to overpower every other game over Christmas). He is working on a new project for 1998, but won't reveal any details of it — even to Core's Press and Marketing dept! Oh well, genius must be accommodated.

RUSTING HULK
Eidos is dithering over Incredible Hulk at the moment (though it may just be dithered out into the shop behind our backs). We don't blame Eidos's hesitation as Hulk frankly doesn't match the standard of Core's output.

DARKLIT
When we went to see Rage they cheerfully told us about a couple of their other developments that look quite Saturn worthy. One is a lovely 3D space battle game called Darklight which no one else seems to be paying much attention to. We're going to follow it up next month. The other is a game version of The War of the Worlds. That's the mega-selling album version from the late Seventies. Apparently, Jeff Lynne is doing some new music for it. Could this be David Essex's first interactive adventure?

SCAVENGER UK
Scavenger, the cool developer which is no stranger to these pages, is setting up two UK offices for game development in Liverpool and London, and they've been advertising for staff. New York, Los Angeles, Copenhagen, Birkenhead...

Hopefully AM3's Sega Rally sequel will make it to Saturn.

ZAP! SNOWBOARDING TRIX

Due for release in Japan soon, Zap! Snowboarding Trix promises wild on-piste action just like you used to get in Board Stupid on Channel 4. It'll also be going up again the recent PlayStation snowboarding game, Cool Boarders by UEP Systems, as that has just been snapped up by Sega for a Saturn release. Both titles feature arcade style gameplay, but it would appear that Zap! features proper racing, while Cool Boarders is just you and a mountain, so to speak.



Zap! Snowboarding Trix. Publisher: Pony Canyon. Available: Spring '97

VIRTUAL ON MODELS

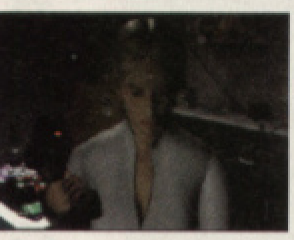


Considering there are over 2000 different types of Gundam model kits available in Japan, it was somewhat inevitable that Virtual On kits would appear. And here they are! Closely resembling the characters from the game, the kits do however need quite a bit of work to make them look as good as these pictures. Retailing at ¥9800 (about 60 quid!), they are a bit of a far cry from those Airfix Spitfires covered in superglue we all had as kids.



Virtual On model kits. Available: Now (Japan)

WARP DELIVERY SERVICE





Warp's second game, the Saturn-exclusive Enemy Zero was released in Japan just before Christmas. However, for people with more money than sense,, an E0 Special Box set was (briefly) available. Costing a cool ¥200,000 (approx. £1250!) and limited to just twenty copies, the 45cm square wooden box contained the game, a replica of the gun featured in the game, a 1/20 scale model of the game's enemies and one of the uniforms made for the unveiling of the game at the recent PS Expo plus twenty unique and secret 'premium' goods. For that extra touch of exclusivity, the boxes were personally delivered to the lucky customers' homes by Warp President and creator of E0, Kenji Eno! No really, they were.

Enemy Zero Special Box. Not available (even in Japan) Developer: Warp

GOIKENMUYO: ANARCHY IN THE NIPPON

SALES CHART: MEGADRIVE

The top five best selling Megadrive games this month as compiled by Chart Track.

1 (-) FIFA '97 (EA)

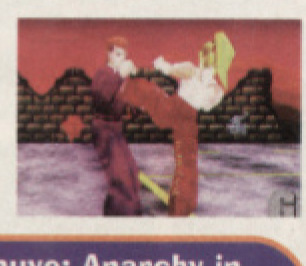
2 (-) Sonic 3D (Sega)

3 (1) Premier Manager '97 (Sega)

4 (2) Toy Story (Sega)

5 (4) Desert Strike (EA)

Taking the prize for most stupid game title ever, Goikenmuyo (which translates as "No need for an opinion!"):Anarchy in the Nippon is worthy of a mention because some of Japan's top Virtua Fighter players are having a hand in the game's development. It's due towards the end of April.



Goikenmuyo: Anarchy in the Nippon. Available: April (Japan) Developer: Mediamuse

GOSSIP SHORTS

TORICO-N

You may recall, regular reader, we mentioned a rendered adventure with a Spanish twist, Torico, a few months back. Sega struck it off the record as American looked uninterested. But now a translation is underway, and the project is back on. Trouble is, Sega can't think of a suitable name! We suggested Spanish Tragedy or something.

ATEI

This month, we're off to the ATEI show in London on the 21st-23rd January 1997. It's the biggest arcade show in Europe this year, and some major coin-ops will be on show. We've been tipped off about Mortal Kombat 4 (yawn), and Tekken 3 (huzzah!). Hopefully Supercar and details of Sega Rally 2 will be available.

PSYGNOSIS

Is there a deal with Psygnosis ahead? Sega America has been taking a close interest in them after the success Wipeout and Destruction Derby have had in pushing the PSX in North America. Already, Krazy Ivan and adidas Power Soccer are pencilled in, but Psygnosis have a huge catalogue of convertibles like Wipeout 2049, Tenka, F1 and DD2. Until recently, Sony had been trying to sell Psygnosis for £150m. Now Sony wants to hold onto the Midlands mega-developer but the firm has more freedom to be a multi-format developer.

PROFITS

Sega Japan made year-on-year recurring profits of around £115m. This represented growth of about 25% and was mostly down to strong domestic Saturn software sales.

EIDOS SELLS SILICON

Eidos, which incorporated US Gold earlier this year (and 'relocated' all its staff to London) has sold US G's development arm, Silicon Dreams back to its old Chairman Geoff Brown, for half-a-million quid. SD's year was one they might like to forget, as the delay which afflicted Olympic Games development contributed to it bombing on the shelf.

OY, MEAN MACHINES! WADDYA THINK OF MY CHART THEN?

MY TOP THREE SATURN GAMES ARE:

....

....

....

I'M GAGGING TO GET MY MITTS ON:

....

I RECKON THE MOST POPULAR GAME WILL BE:

....

NAME: ....

ADDRESS:...

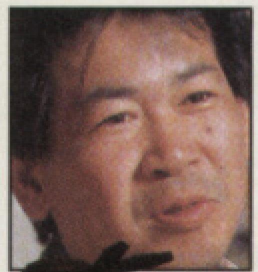
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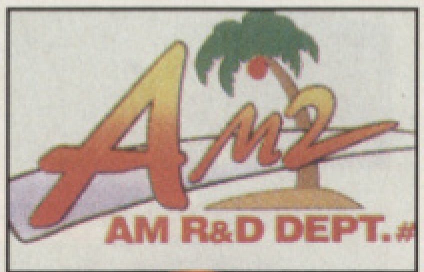
Send to: **Readers Chart, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.**

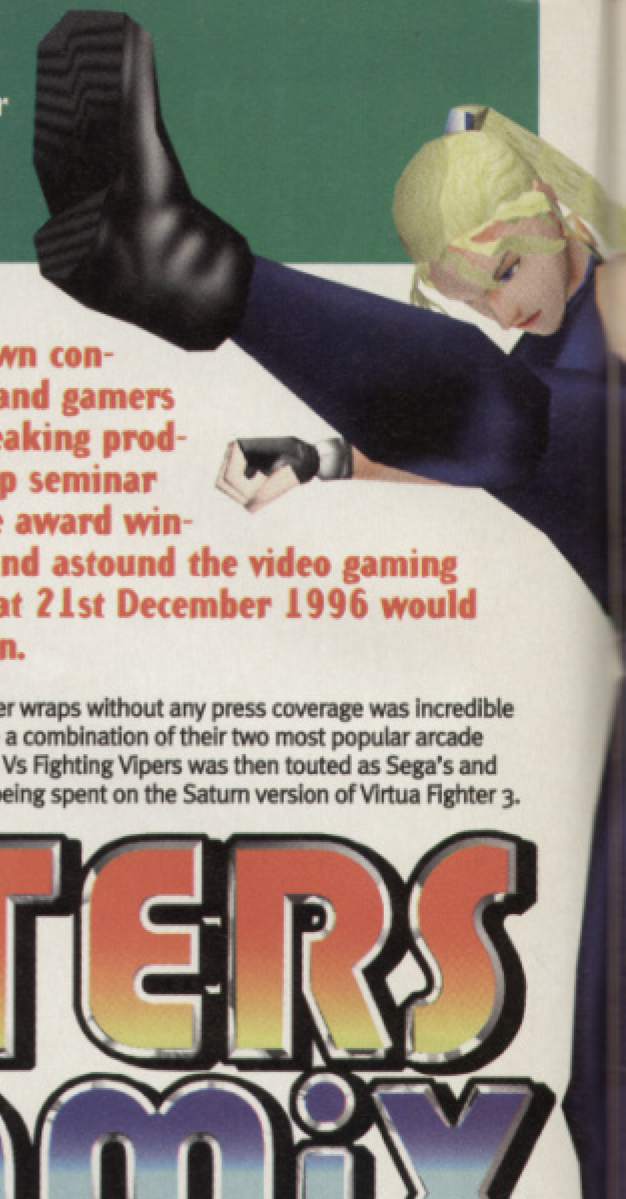


we think modern gamesplayers have had it easy
now we'll prove it!
MEGA DRIVE
...latest high scores...
Mean Machines Sega
90%
ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS
SUPER NINTENDO
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
...latest high scores...
NMS
92%
FIVE OF THE TOUGHEST ARCADE CHALLENGES OF ALL-TIME BLAST THEIR WAY ONTO MEGA DRIVE AND SUPER NES TO TEST THE METTLE OF A WHOLE NEW GENERATION OF GAMESPLAYERS.
JUST HOW GOOD ARE YOU?
T•HQ INTERNATIONAL
MIDWAY
DEFENDER
DEFENDER II
ROBOTRON: 2084
JOUST
SINISTAR
T•HQ International Ltd, 4 The Parade, Epsom, Surrey KT18 5DH
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AM2's last big game of the year is a beat-'em-up extravaganza!







Yu Suzuki and the AM2 team have always been the jewel in Sega's crown constantly surprising both their peers and gamers alike with product after ground-breaking product. The recent Sega Japan Power Up seminar was yet another opportunity for the award winning development team to delight and astound the video gaming world with the last minute announcement that 21st December 1996 would see the release of Fighters Megamix on Saturn.



The fact that AM2 had managed to keep a major console game under wraps without any press coverage was incredible enough but the news that this forthcoming Saturn game would be a combination of their two most popular arcade beat-'em-up titles was unprecedented. The idea of Virtua Fighters Vs Fighting Vipers was then touted as Sega's and AM2's last major release of the year with development time now being spent on the Saturn version of Virtua Fighter 3.

FIGHTERS MEGAMIX



Above: Jane shatters Grace's armour with one powerful punch. Even Virtua Fighters can perform Armour Breakers in Fighters Megamix!

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

The revelation that Fighters Megamix would merge both classic combat coin-ops was enough to start tongues wagging and confused postings started to appear on the Internet over night. Would the characters have new moves? Would Fighters Megamix run in the Saturn's high resolution mode as indeed Virtua Fighter 2 did? Would the bosses be selectable? Could Sega milk their licenses any further (only joking guys!)? Further confirmations were soon forthcoming courtesy of AM2's Web site. Fighters Megamix would feature a total of 22 selectable characters as well as 10 hidden fighters based on existing AM2 products. However, fans of both games still have a million and one questions regarding the beat-'em-up event of the year so MEAN MACHINES went straight to Sega UK in an attempt to root out some concrete facts, play the only version of the game in the country and find out just who those mystery fighters really are. Here's what we uncovered:







ONE PLAYER MODE

The standard one-player mode remains basically as it was in both Virtua Fighter 2, Fighting Vipers and almost every single combat game ever created. However, there are also exclusive gameplay additions which AM2 feel will significantly enhance this already amazing beat-'em-up experience. Players first choose their characters from a whopping selection of 22 fighters (of course there are also secret characters to play with but more of that on page 21) and are then required to select a path to travel. So far there are eight separate routes to choose from including Novice, Virtua Fighters, Fighting Vipers and Girls, to name just a few. So, for example, if you opt for the Girls route you'll only tackle femme fatales of both titles before facing a mysterious bonus character as indicated by the question mark.





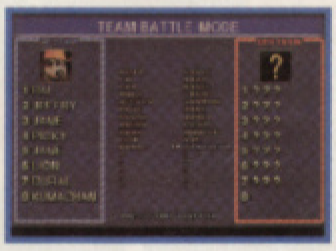


VS MODE

The two player Vs mode provides players with a true combat challenge. Both players select one of the available fighters then knock each other senseless over a set number of rounds. Pressing Start takes you to an additional screen allowing you to choose the number of rounds, length of each battle, the amount of energy each fighter has, which stage the battle will take place on.



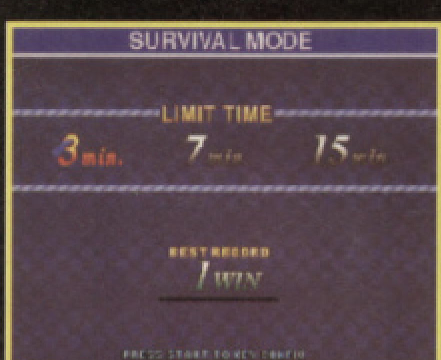
TEAM BATTLE MODE

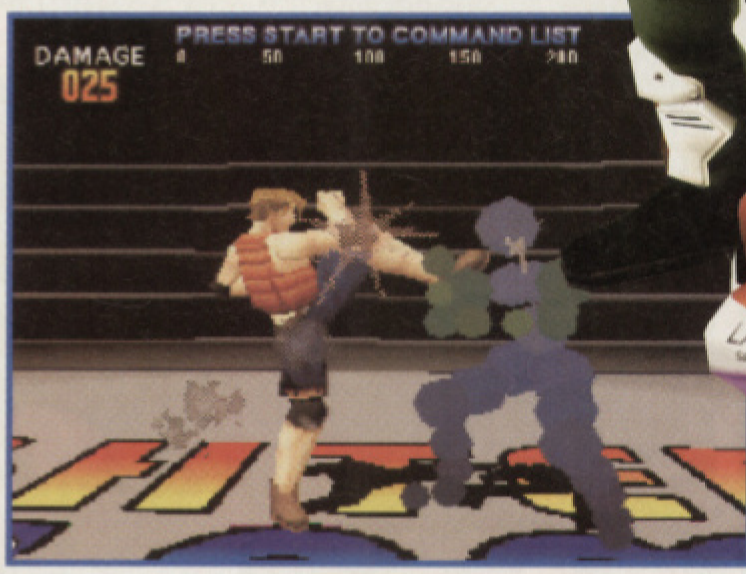


Although appearing in both Virtua Fighter 2 and Fighting Vipers, the Team Battle Mode returns once again with players selecting up to eight fighters each before entering the fray. What follows is a series of win/lose/draw matches with each team attempting to trounce the other. This mode accommodates either two human players or one human team versus a CPU team. Which ever option you choose, the Team Battle Mode is a riot and looks set to offer hours of fun. Fancy eight Kumachans on the same squad? No problem! An all girls team? Absolutely! The winning team not only gets to thrust their chests out in victorious pride but the final scores are prominently displayed before being saved for posterity.

SURVIVAL MODE

Many beat-'em-ups have included Survival Modes (including the Saturn version of Street Fighter Zero 2) and so it's really no surprise to discover that AM2 have included this feature in Fighters Megamix. This is strictly a one player mode with a single fighter attempting to defeat as many opponents as possible within a set number of rounds and a strict time limit. You can set the time limit to either 3, 7 or a gruelling 15 minutes. As you tackle each fighter in swift succession your energy bar begins to be drained. The life bar is not refilled for each round and you'll begin each fight with a reduced energy level. Once it's empty it's game over and the number of wins you've obtained is proudly displayed. This section offers players a real challenge.





TRAINING MODE

The Fighting Vipers Training Mode was so popular with both novice players and experienced masters that AM2 have also included it in Fighters Megamix. This practice session takes place in the same enclosed boxing ring although this time there's the game's logo on the floor and you test out your attacks on a bubble constructed character which seems to have been based on the fighters in the appalling Megadrive game, Ballz! Pressing Start brings up a list of your characters moves which are then performed by the CPU. Players need to watch the motions and follow the on-screen directions before attempting it themselves. As each move is correctly performed an "OK!" message flashes up, indicating that you've successfully mastered that particular attack. In FV, performing all the moves for three fighters opened up a secret Big Head Mode. Hmm..

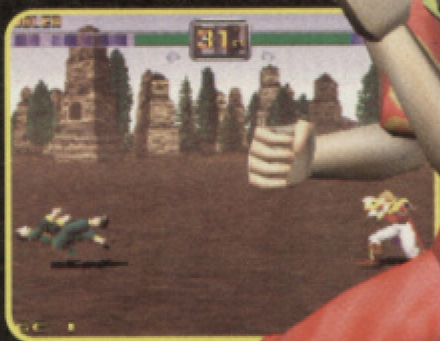
NEW COSTUMES!

Sega has even included updated costumes for some characters just for a bit of a laugh. We caught a glimpse of Candy (Honey in Japan) sporting a rather smart new canary yellow variation of her famous PVC costume as well as a schoolgirl outfit complete with backpack and stripy red and white leggings! The Virtua Fighters have also undergone slight graphical overhauls with their outfits looking even more spectacular than ever. 'Vipers boss Mahler has received a major cosmetic refitting with his trademark King Cobra outfit being replaced with a new trenchcoated look resulting in him bearing more than a passing resemblance to Cervantes, the scary pirate boss from Namco's Soul Edge. We'll bring you a nitpicker's guide next month.





STAGES



We'll let you into a little secret here: we've discovered a whopping 33 stages lurking within Fighters Megamix! There are actually separate backgrounds for each individual character (including the hidden fighters) as well as the boxing ring from the Training Mode. It's possible there may be other ultra-secret stages locked within the game as well but only time and a full review copy will reveal them.

If you were wondering whether Fighters Megamix was going to include VF stages or 'Vipers walls and cages, the good news is they're both included. Sort of. AM2 have decided to include all the backdrops from Virtua Fighter 1 and 2 although Ring Outs are now a thing of the past. In fact throw your opponent on Jeffry's beach stage, for instance, and they'll just keep running until you're both facing each other on opposite sides of the screen!

Every 'Vipers stage has been ported over relatively intact with walls, cages and fences just waiting to be used for cool combos. Minor alterations include an aeroplane taking off (dangerously low!) over Raxel's stage, some levels being altered in overall size and Picky's UFO Diner background now taking place during the daytime. Watching a Virtua Fighter character smashing a 'Vipers fighter through a solid concrete wall is truly a sight to be seen!

Before a match starts players can actually select the type of stage they wish to fight on by highlighting "With Wall", "Random" or "Without Wall".

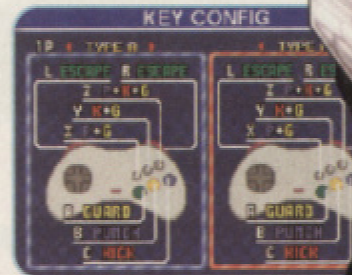


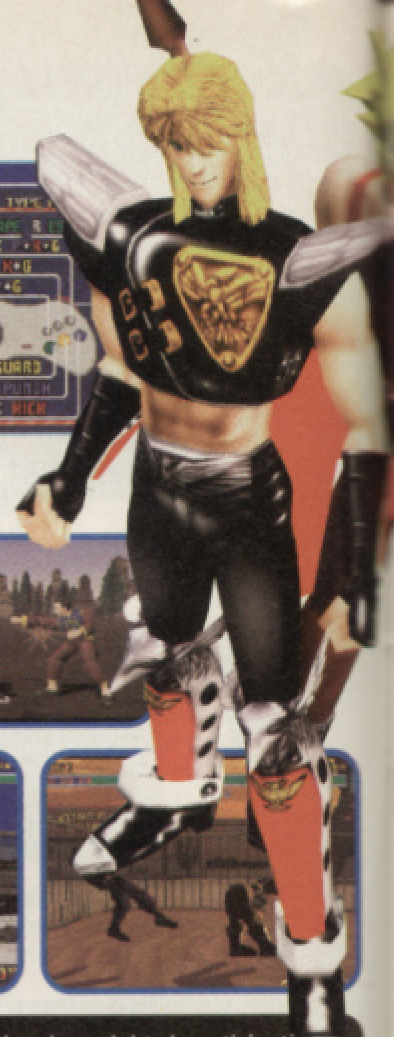


ESCAPE BUTTON



We've included this gratuitous screenshot of the Key Config. screen as it highlights a major button addition swiped from Virtua Fighter 3. The top Left and Right shoulder buttons are utilised for performing a side-step motion which is best employed to dodge incoming attacks. Running opponents will be completely fooled as they dash in and you nip out of the way at the last minute. Yu Suzuki included the Escape Button in VF3 to aid defensive players. In fact over-aggressive opponents can now be hastily avoided without players having to suffer an unending series of multi-hit combos. Combined with other standard moves the Escape button adds yet another layer of strategy to Fighters Megamix.









NEW MOVES!





Although our time spent with Fighters Megamix was both short and exhilarating, we were fortunate to witness some of the new moves that AM2 has implemented from Virtua Fighter 3. Yu Suzuki's latest arcade beat-'em-up is an undeniable worldwide smash hit and Saturn owners are already suffering sleepless nights in anticipation of its console release. Keen to offer fans of the series a taster of this forthcoming combat classic, Sega decided to include a few new attacks for the existing Virtua Fighter characters. So far we've seen some amazing grapples from Wolf where he sneaks behind his opponent, grabs them, then is capable of performing a number of throws or holds. Pai seems to have inherited a few of graceful Aoi's moves including a flip kick and a number of spectacular throws. Fighting Vipers characters have also received new moves.

RECOVERY MOVES

Fighting Vipers introduced players to the concept of 'Recovery Moves', adding yet another tactic to AM2's list of beat-'em-up breakthrough's. These Recovery Moves are back in Fighters Megamix although now every character can perform this mid-air move enabling players to land on their feet if knocked into the air. This feature also enables players to avoid being used as a floating punchbag and gives them the opportunity to leap back into the thick of things once their feet tough the ground. You'll instantly know when a Recovery Move has been successfully performed as your fighter will flash green for a split second then spin round in mid-air ready to land on Terra Firma in one piece.

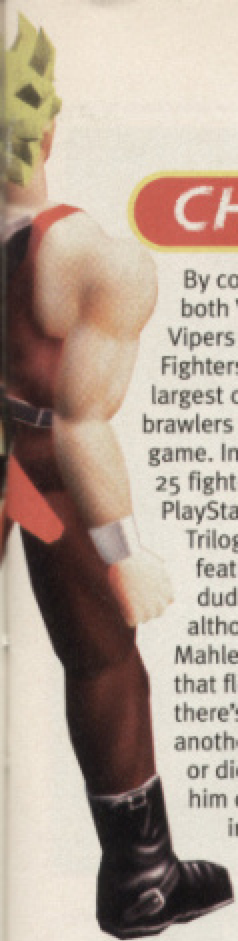






ARMOUR BREAKERS

We've noticed worried comments on the Internet in the past month from fighting game fans worried that Fighters Megamix would introduce the Virtua Fighter characters in new armour-based costumes. Well, we're happy to say this hasn't been the case and all your favourite fighters appear clothed as they were in VF2. However, Akira and his pals can now all perform Armour Breaker moves on the Fighting Vipers characters! Yep, those 'Vipers aren't so tough without their fancy padded costumes. Pull-off an Armour Breaker and you're treated to an impressive multiple angle replay of the costume being shattered. Use this attack on a player with very little energy left and they'll be smashed straight through the surrounding wall or fence depending on which stage you've selected. Virtua Fighter characters attempting Armour Breaker moves on each other will only succeed in draining a portion of their opponent's energy.



CHARACTERS

By combining the character rosters of both Virtua Fighter 2 and Fighting Vipers plus a host of secret characters, Fighters Megamix boasts one of the largest collection of beat-'em-up brawlers in any one-on-one combat game. In fact Tekken 2 only has a paltry 25 fighters to choose from (the PlayStation version of Mortal Kombat Trilogy is still the winner though as it features a whopping 37 digitised dudes!). The strange thing is, although bosses Dural, B.M. and Mahler are all selectable (as well as that floating furry fury, Kumachan) there's no sign of Pepsiman. Is he yet another undiscovered secret character or did Sega simply decide to leave him out of this compilation due to international licensing problems?



AKIRA

Sex: Male
Hobby: Kung-Fu
Height: 180cm
Weight: 79kg
Blood Type: O
Date of Birth: 23/9/68
Country: Japan
Fighting Style: Hakkyoku-Ken



PAI

Sex: Female
Hobby: Dancing
Height: 167cm
Weight: 48kg
Blood Type: O
Date of Birth: 17/5/75
Country: Hong Kong
Fighting Style: Ensei-Ken



LAU

Sex: Male
Hobby: Chinese poems
Height: 172cm
Weight: 77kg
Blood Type: B
Date of Birth: 2/10/40
Country: China
Fighting Style: Koen-Ken



WOLF

Sex: Male
Hobby: Karaoke
Height: 182cm
Weight: 104kg
Blood Type: O
Date of Birth: 8/2/66
Country: Canada
Fighting Style: Professional wrestling



JEFFRY

Sex: Male
Hobby: Reggae music
Height: 183cm
Weight: 112kg
Blood Type: A
Date of Birth: 20/2/57
Country: Australia
Fighting Style: Pancratium



JACKY

Sex: Male
Hobby: Training
Height: 182cm
Weight: 75kg
Blood Type: A
Date of Birth: 28/8/70
Country: America
Fighting Style: Jeet Kune Do



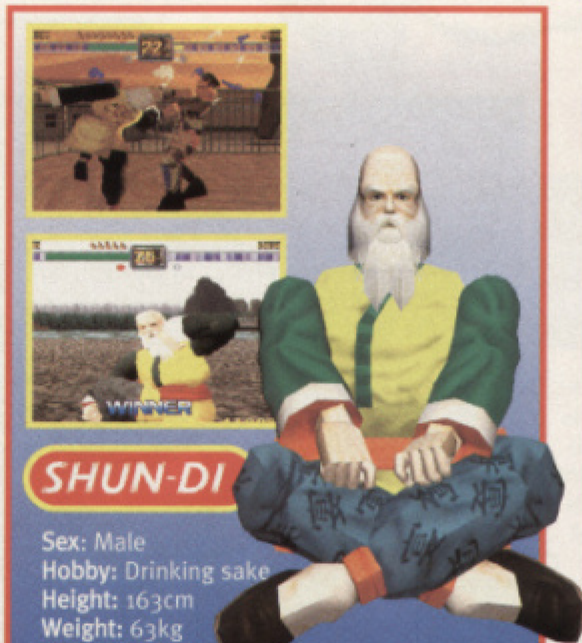
SARAH

Sex: Female
Hobby: Skydiving
Height: 173cm
Weight: 55kg
Blood Type: AB
Date of Birth: 4/7/73
Country: America
Fighting Style: Jeet Kune Do



KAGE

Sex: Male
Hobby: Mah-jong
Height: 178cm
Weight: 66kg
Blood Type: B
Date of Birth: 6/6/71
Country: Japan
Fighting Style: Ju-Jitsu



SHUN-DI

Sex: Male
Hobby: Drinking sake
Height: 163cm
Weight: 63kg
Blood Type: O
Date of Birth: 2/1/12
Country: China
Fighting Style: Drunk Kung-Fu



LION

Sex: Male
Hobby: Skateboarding
Height: 174cm
Weight: 63kg
Blood Type: AB
Date of Birth: 24/12/79
Country: France
Fighting Style: Tourou-ken



DURAL

Sex: No File
Hobby: No File
Height: No File
Weight: No File
Blood Type: No File
Date of Birth: No File
Country: No File
Fighting Style: No File



BAHN

Sex: Male
Height: 185cm
Weight: 88kg
Age: 17
Stage: Old Armstone City
Speciality: Big Stroke



TOKIO

Sex: Male
Height: 174cm
Weight: 65kg
Age: 16
Stage: The Armstone Airport
Speciality: Spin Kick Combo



CANDY

Sex: Female
Height: 159cm
Weight: Secret
Age: 16
Stage: Bayside
Speciality: Cat Punch



SANMAN

Sex: Male
Height: 180cm
Weight: 132kg
Age: Unknown
Stage: Armstone Town
Speciality: Bodily Crush



PICKY

Sex: Male
Height: 162cm
Weight: 50kg
Age: 14
Stage: The UFO Diner
Speciality: Skateboard Attack



JANE

Sex: Female
Height: 168cm
Weight: 69kg
Age: 18
Stage: The Observation Deck
Speciality: Punch Combo

We reckon Yu Suzuki is a secret Megamix character!



RAXEL

Sex: Male
Height: 177cm
Weight: 55kg
Age: 19
Stage: The City Tower
Speciality: Guitar Attack



GRACE

Sex: Female
Height: 178cm
Weight: 58kg
Age: 19
Stage: The Big Factory
Speciality: Leg Combo



MAHLER

Sex: Male
Height: N/A
Weight: N/A
Age: 19
Stage: Secret
Speciality: Unknown



B.M.

Sex: Male
Height: N/A
Weight: N/A
Age: N/A
Stage: Helicopter Pad
Speciality: Unknown



KUMACHAN

Sex: Male
Height: 220cm
Weight: N/A
Age: 1
Stage: Secret
Speciality: Floating Fun



For some reason Pepsiman is not a selectable boss character. Could he be a hidden fighter? And just who is the mysterious figure below?



HIDDEN CHARACTERS

One quick glance at the character selection will tell you there are at least ten hidden characters to discover lurking within Fighters Megamix. We've seen them all but unfortunately we can't reveal any details just yet as we've been sworn to secrecy! However, it's fairly common knowledge that all the secret fighters have in fact appeared in other AM2 games. We'll leave it up to you to figure out who might be hiding behind these question marks but you're not gonna believe who some of them are!





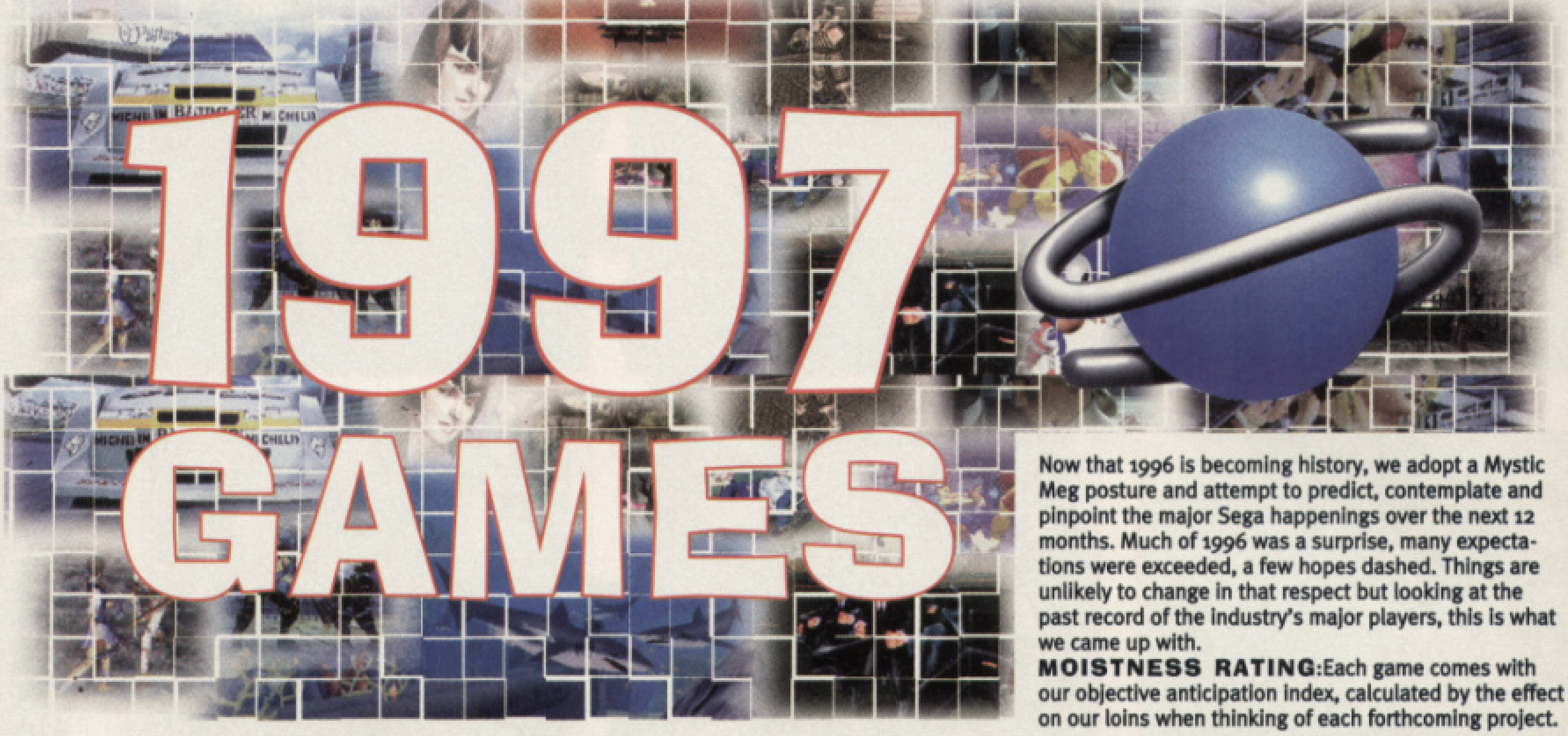
NEXT MONTH

As you read this we'll have taken delivery of a Japanese version of Fighters Megamix on 21st December and no doubt cracked its many secrets wide open. As the UK version isn't actually due for release until March we won't be reviewing AM2's latest creation for a couple of issues but we'll still bring you further fascinating Fighters facts next month. Betcha can't wait!



So you thought 1996 was a fantastic year for Sega? Well just wait until '97 kicks in! MEAN MACHINES takes a look at the hottest Saturn titles currently in production.

1997 GAMES



Now that 1996 is becoming history, we adopt a Mystic Meg posture and attempt to predict, contemplate and pinpoint the major Sega happenings over the next 12 months. Much of 1996 was a surprise, many expectations were exceeded, a few hopes dashed. Things are unlikely to change in that respect but looking at the past record of the industry's major players, this is what we came up with.

MOISTNESS RATING: Each game comes with our objective anticipation index, calculated by the effect on our loins when thinking of each forthcoming project.

SPRING



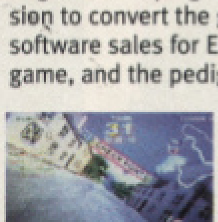
What the hacks refer to as 'Quarter 1' or 'Q1'. That means April, the start of the financial year, and a chance to forget the unrealistic sales expectations of the last period. We classify Spring a little earlier — as March is normally full of interesting releases, as software companies desperately try to improve their financial figures before the end of the last quarter.



MANX TT

Sega were hoping for a Christmas release, but intense work at Tantalus, who got the commission to convert the game (to some observers' surprise) should ensure a release to boost Saturn software sales for Easter. The machine needs a really good motorbike game, and the pedigree of the arcade original is spotless. The question is whether the Saturn can handle the gut-wrenching speed of the graphics and the absence of a full-size Suzuki bike.

MOISTNESS RATING: Wet Weather Warning





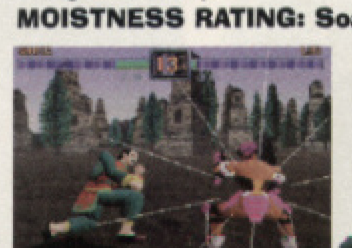


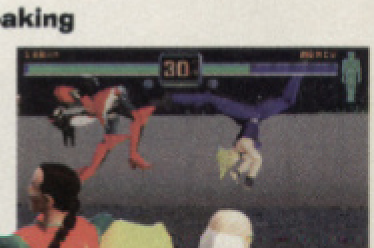


FIGHTERS MEGAMIX

More details elsewhere in this issue, but April is the scheduled UK release for this clash of AM2's two fighting titans. As much an opportunity for Yu Suzuki's men to refine their Saturn programming techniques. Inevitably, this is only a taster for 1997's REALLY big beat-'em-up.

MOISTNESS RATING: Soaking









ENEMY ZERO

We assume Acclaim has the bottle to bring out a four CD adventure game in the Spring, in fact we hope they do, as Enemy Zero boasts a style and atmosphere that shames most current Hollywood fodder. The alluring Laura finds herself on a drifting space craft, the AK-1, and has to creep around its maze of corridors, confronting a stealthy, cunning enemy.

MOISTNESS RATING: Humid





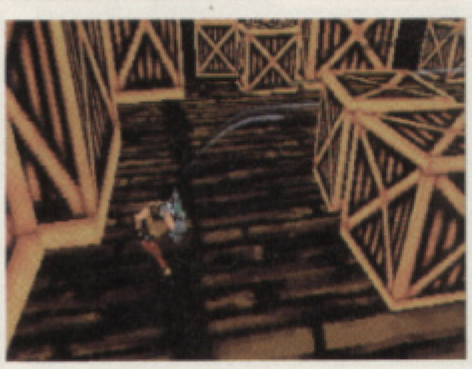
WILD NINES

If Shiny make the deadline for their first Saturn game, we'll be very surprised. The idea of a full 3D platform game with all the elements their design document suggest will be a struggle even for them. Shades of the Earthworm Jim games survive in the gameplay ideas but there's an entire new cast of characters and an iconoclastic weapons system that has Dave Perry particularly excited. Guaranteed to have graphics to die for.

MOISTNESS RATING: Very Damp







DIE HARD ARCADE

Sega is almost paranoid about publicity concerning this game, due to contractual obligations. So we're talking about the ST-V arcade version here, which is out. The only Die Hard connection seems to be the Nakatomi building but there are few games which allow you to spray aerosols in people's faces and where jumping across lift shafts is considered fun. As ST-V is almost Saturn identical, the conversion is assured but adapting its short term appeal to have greater longevity on a console is no small feat.

MOISTNESS RATING: Moist







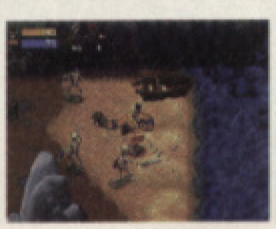
HERC'S ADVENTURES

This LucasArts game from Virgin has had little build up so far, and the premise is not that stirring but let's face it LucasArts do not exactly have a reputation for crap games, do they? Herc appears to be a vulgarisation of Hercules, who has to labour his way through lots of cartoon scenes from ancient myths. Won't have quite the same impact as Homer's Iliad but fans of action RPGs like Thor and Dark Saviour should be alert.

MOISTNESS RATING: Damp



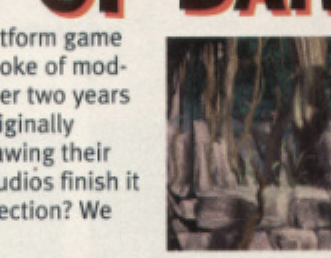




MICRO MACHINES V3

Just as the PSX mags were reaching fever pitch about this, Codemasters put the skids on it until the Spring, so all versions could be released. This really looks like being a wonderful, universally-enjoyed gameplay experience in video games, and should elbow out most of its sad shelf peers come release time.

MOISTNESS RATING: Wet





HEART OF DARKNESS

This overly-ambitious platform game has become the biggest joke of modern video games. Now over two years late, most people who originally craved it have started drawing their pension. Will Amazing Studios finish it in time for the General Election? We wouldn't bet on it.

MOISTNESS RATING: Drip Dry



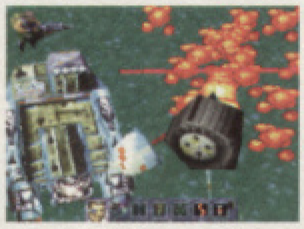


1997 is going to be Sega's year!

CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR







Konami's hottest property, and one we would dearly like to see before the clocks go forward. Contra promises lots of blasting, rotating scenery, polygons, polygons, polygons darling and big scary sprites.

MOISTNESS RATING: Wet

PROJECT OVERKILL





Another project Konami has been dragging its heels over on Saturn. The original premise of an isometric blaster for the bloodthirsty and brainy still appeals. Project Overkill has already scored highly in PlayStation mags, with ratings in the high 80's, and the Saturn game could do just as well.

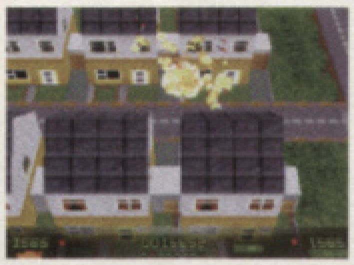
MOISTNESS RATING: Damp

MASS DESTRUCTION

Featured in the pages before as TANK, this is the pet project of Tilt creators, NMS Software in Walsall. A game you want if the idea of trolling around in a heavily armoured vehicle demolishing town hall clocks is appealing. The action is displayed from an overhead perspective, like Loaded, but as everything is constructed from polygons, it's clear, crisp and fast. Outrageous explosions are another 'selling point'.

MOISTNESS RATING: Moist





MECHWARRIOR 2

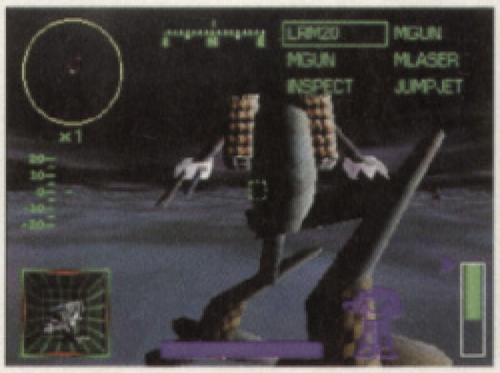






The PC original, classic 3D robot blasting is not such a big name to bring to Saturn. The promises are of 30 new missions and amazing 3D performance. Activision is anxious to feed us lots of details about this but past performance of ditching stuff (Spycraft, Return to Zork) provides niggling worries. Still, this could be one to watch for.

MOISTNESS RATING: Neutral





PROJECT EARTH

Eidos' response to Command and Conquer being developed on a raft of formats, of which Saturn is one. Expect lots of titchy sprites knocking seven bells out of each other. We saw an early version at the last ECTS. The sprites looked a bit pre-school, but there are lots of good gameplay ideas in this one.

MOISTNESS RATING: Neutral

JONAH LOMU RUGBY

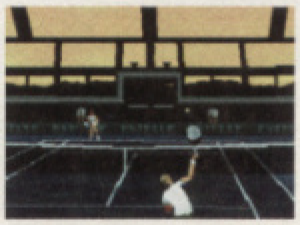


The first rugby game for 32 bit machines and a very good idea. The towering presence of the New Zealand star is not the only thing going for this 3D simulation. Codemasters look like adding a new standard of graphics to its proven reputation for gameplay in their new sporting title.

MOISTNESS RATING: Moist

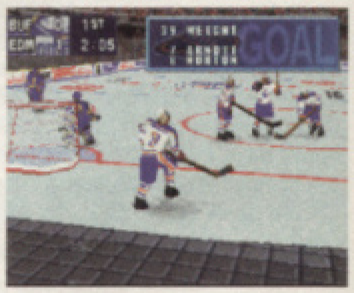
ATP BREAKPOINT 2

The sequel is due only six months after the original Saturn version of Breakpoint but Ocean stress this is a different league to the poorly received tennis game which only scored 64% last month. As well as enhanced graphics and better responsiveness, it has all the statistics of the ATP circuit.



MOISTNESS RATING: Dry

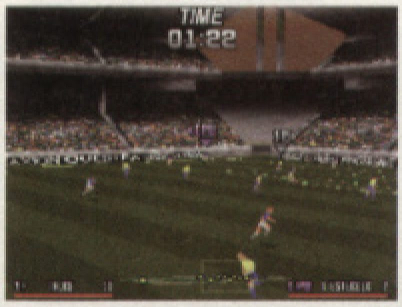
NHL POWERPLAY '97



Virgin has decided not to release Powerplay '96, as they say the sequel is so near completion and updated it considerably. If you want the best ice hockey you should considering waiting for this, as the now canned '96 edition is still fine stuff.

MOISTNESS RATING: Misty

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER





It's what we've heard and Psygnosis' acclaimed PSX football game should be an easy candidate for conversion. Well within the Saturn's capabilities and football games sell well whatever the season or weather. Has a job at out-performing Worldwide though.

MOISTNESS RATING: Damp







UEFA '97

This is where it gets complex — whereas Philips certainly has the rights to UEFA's Champions League tournament, Ocean actually has the rights to the body themselves for the next few years. Although the football scene is definitely looking busy for 1997, Ocean is really going to town with this one — even going as far as to say that it has the visual flair of Sega's arcade game Virtua Striker. We're going out to France to see for ourselves so we'll keep you posted.

MOISTNESS RATING: Unknown



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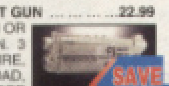
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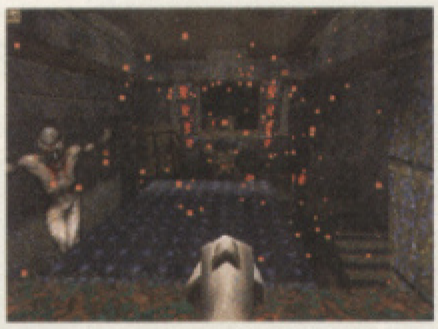
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SUMMER

The long, hot (our in our experience, short and showery) British Summer is not a time renowned for excellent releases but looking at last year's tally, there were some good titles launched. This year there's a strong chance of good titles slipping from the Spring release schedule. Expect a few RPGs to appear then and also expect a few of those listed here to fall back to the more lucrative Autumn period.

QUAKE





The rumour mill is working overtime trying to work out the story on this. GT Interactive talked about this game months back but seem to have gone cold, although reports from Id (who have mostly disbanded) seemed to suggest they were keen on the idea. Then, a couple of months back, important people at Sega were saying the project was very much alive: and they would be handling it. To add to this surprising turnaround of events was the idea that Quake may be a Saturn exclusive! Since the PC game — an unbelievable global smash — relies on multi-player participation for the best gameplay, we think this might all have a connection to Sega's Netlink device, and their on-line gaming strategy.

Quake itself, is like Doom, only more so. Player's explore four difficulty-based 3D stages decked out as cyber-mediaeval and full of ludicrous polygon monsters (like the nightmarish Shambler) and cool weapons (lightning guns, nail guns etc). The solo game is without a shadow of a doubt the best Doom-style game yet made but the multi-player experience, where up to 16 blood thirsty participants run riot in a killing orgy, is one of the best video games experiences EVER.

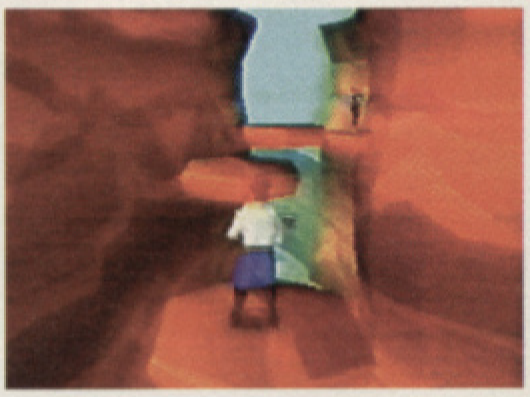


MOISTNESS RATING: Wet, Wet, Wet

RATTLESNAKE RED



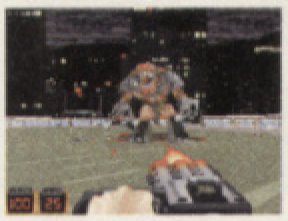




Acclaim has a potential huge hit on its hands if Rattlesnake lives up to the billing of 'Mario 64 on the Saturn'. While the quality of the polygon 3D suggests something like that, the game has original ideas of its own. Set in striking Wild West landscapes (which evoke memories of Road Runner cartoons) the game mixes logic and skill puzzles with platforming and creature-bashing. The hero Red carries a large mallet and a stock of dynamite with which he can alter the landscape. It looks like jolly good prospecting fun.

MOISTNESS RATING: Dewy

DUKE NUKEM 3D



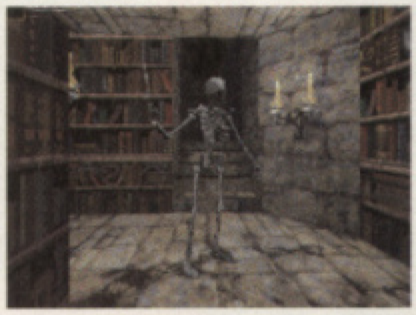




If the vague release dates are held to, Duke should be a potent rival to Quake in a 3D shoot-'em-up tussle. Like Quake, a PC port-over, and obviously inspired by Id's previous work, Doom. Duke's big original feature is the ability to set traps, and be nasty to your fellow players. We're optimistic about this one, since Duke's creators are Lobotomy Software, who did a VERY nice job on Exhumed for Saturn (well up to Duke's 3D standards) and show a bit more interest in Saturn than PlayStation (Exhumed for Sony's machine is well-delayed).

MOISTNESS RATING: Mostly Moistly

INTO THE SHADOWS



The most eagerly anticipated title of the coding conglomerate that seems to have the most ambitious portfolio of Saturn projects but never seems to get them released. Scorcher, AMOK — these titles have been kicking around in development for years. Into the Shadows does look extremely smart, a full-blown dungeon RPG but with incredible polygon characters and real-time fighting. The latest sequences sent to us by Scavenger, from the leading PC version, look incredible. Wizards and magic, Orcs and heroes, goblins and elves, it's going to be epic stuff.



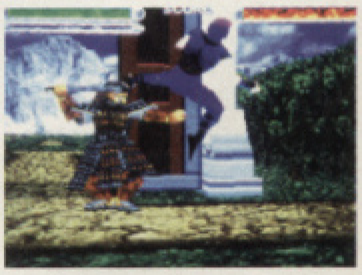






MOISTNESS RATING: Dripping

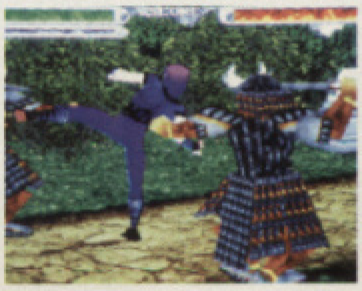
NINJA





Core has two big beat-'em-ups planned and Ninja is the most mysterious one. It's a scrolling combat game, with a considerable fantasy element. The settings suggest the world of Japanese lore, with ornate Samurai and huge dragons. We've also seen a huge spider lair. Everything is in polygons and the most attractive feature at the moment is the freedom given to move around the play area.

MOISTNESS RATING: Moist



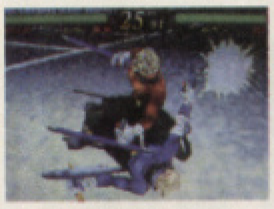


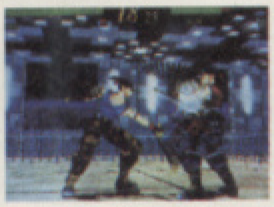
LAST BRONX

When AM3 replied to their stablemates AM2 with a beat-'em-up of their own, it received a critical welcome but little of the razzamatazz of the Virtua Fighter series. Nevertheless, Last Bronx's big feature is weapons — most of the characters 'have the right to bear arms'. When these are employed a cool strobing effect shows the arc of the weapon as it strikes. AM3 publicity have begun showing demos of the characters moving across a playfield, which leads us to estimate when Last Bronx will be ready.



MOISTNESS RATING: Droplets







DUNGEON KEEPER



Peter Molyneux at Bullfrog strides the world of strategy games like a Colossus, and this could be his last for the Guildford-based developer. Dungeon Keeper is a fantasy adventure game with one major twist — you actually play the evil master of the treasure-filled lair instead of the usual hero role. Like Theme Park, you assemble 'staff' in this case monsters, and create 'attractions', including treasure chambers, torture chambers and all kinds of traps. Throughout the game you get the unwelcome attention of adventurers. Tackling them leads to a clash of your loathsome creatures with the scrubbed-down do-gooders.





MOISTNESS RATING: Sticky

PANDEMONIUM

This was Crystal Dynamics only product of note in 1996, and has gone down well enough on PSX for them to consider a Saturn version. It's a platform game set on a winding, seemingly endless path which meanders through all kinds of polygon environments. We wait to hear if the project has been officially confirmed, but our guess is it would take six months to see the conversion through.



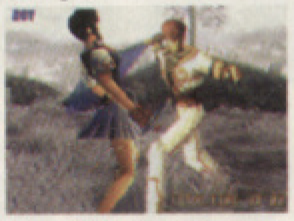
MOISTNESS RATING: Misty

D-XHIRD

The name behind Toshinden is creating this new 3D beat-'em-up. From still publicity shots, D-XHIRD certainly looks the best beat-'em-up Takara has ever put together, with impressive levels of character detail. Whether Takara invokes its legendary powers of spooning-up the gameplay remains to be seen.

MOISTNESS RATING: Dusty



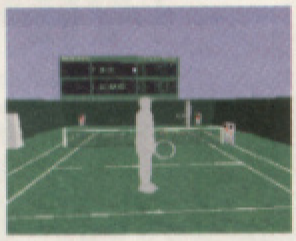






ACTUA TENNIS

Gremlin's 'Actua' sports series has already established a reputation for quality on the back of 'Soccer and 'Golf. We would be surprised if the same level of realism didn't go into tennis. The companies motion-capture facilities in particular could create stunning player animation.



MOISTNESS RATING: Damp

ARMS RACE



A project Gremlin have just announced for late June. Arms Race is a 3D tank game set in a world 'not unlike the Re-loaded Engine'. Shooting and strategy, a clubby 'feel' and a celebrity soundtrack is all we have to go on at the moment.





MOISTNESS RATING: Dry

TUNNEL B1 II

Or maybe they will have the sense to call it Tunnel B2. Once again, NEON of Germany are doing the honours, and they have learned a lot about game structure from the experience of Tunnel B1. Ocean promise a far more ambitious, and even faster sequel.



MOISTNESS RATING: Neutral

ID4

Fox Interactive had been steadily working prior to the release of the huge hit Independence Day and the Saturn game is still being tinkered with even now. Seemingly the first few ideas were a bit crap, explaining the delay behind the flying shoot-'em-up we should see next year (courtesy of Funcom), which is obviously inspired by aerial dogfight sequences. Hopefully it will not 'go quietly into the dark night'.



MOISTNESS RATING: Arid

CRYPT KILLER

The next point of interest for Virtua Gun users. Konami is porting its three-player arcade target shooter directly, although it will probably only support two guns. As the title suggests, the scene is one of treasure-rich resting places of the dead, who aren't resting. Lots of sprite-skeleton shooting. Great fun.

MOISTNESS RATING: Neutral







CONSTRUCTOR

The Saturn needs another good Sim City-style game, and System 3's cheeky take-off of town planning is the answer. Currently being developed for PC, it has players creating neighbourhoods to become landlords whilst using shady means to ruin adjacent properties and beggar their opponents.

MOISTNESS RATING: Neutral



Quake will be massive as well as a Saturn exclusive!

AUTUMN

At this point we get a tad conjectural. As game schedules are notoriously inaccurate, who can say if all of these games will make it for September, or indeed, if they don't appear earlier. But here's a taster of what the latter half of next year will bring.





VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

Although people have been speculating since the arrival of VF2, it was only in November that Yu Suzuki, head of development at AM2, confirmed that Saturn would get VF3, after an objective look at whether the machine can handle the mechanics of the game. AM2's policy has always been to convert a project if the 'essence' of the original can be maintained but by past experience the graphics and sound have been pretty close too.

However, there is more speculation, which we would pay credence to, that VF3 will arrive with some form of upgrade, most probably in cartridge form, to boost the Saturn's graphic capability. The arcade game has some astonishing lighting and weather effects, including 3D rendered snow falling in realtime. Gameplay, of course, is the main concern, and players can expect to see the same simple, instinctive controls of Virtua Fighter 2, with a new dodge button, which expands on the side-stepping moves that proved popular in VF2. There are two new characters, entirely new scenes, and hopefully a cool version of that incredible intro sequence that first wowed us back at E3 Los Angeles in May 1996.

MOISTNESS RATING: Soaking







JUDGMENT FORCE



As confirmed in our news exclusive, the game-that-would-be Streets of Rage (but isn't) is one of Core's core titles for 1997. At the rate it's going, it should blow every other scrolling beat-'em-up out of the water. The game doesn't just scroll, it rotates and zooms like the true polygon environment it is. Some really ambitious level designs, including submarines and space stations are in there — players choose routes as they progress.

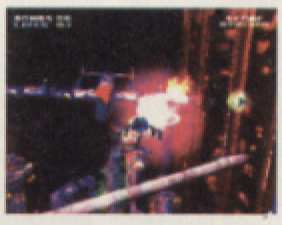
MOISTNESS RATING: Sweaty



VIPER

NEON's second game for Ocean takes the speed of Tunnel B1 (they originate from the same programming engine) to create a stunning helicopter game set in the same post-industrial, lens-flaring, smoke-stacking setting.

MOISTNESS RATING: Fresh





X-MEN vs STREET FIGHTER

Those who hold a candle for Capcom beat-'em-ups will have your hearts set on this. We predict a Spring release for Saturn, and a long wait over the Summer for the UK version. That's with the experience of Darkstalkers, which arrived 8 months after it was released in Japan! It should be worth the wait, considering this has the clearest and largest sprites yet from Capcom's CPS II, and goes like an absolute bunny. Also, it's a Saturn exclusive — one to rub in Sony owners' faces.

MOISTNESS RATING: Moist







SONIC!

No one has handed us details about a Sonic game, but we know that one is in progress. The story of Sonic Extreme didn't end with its replacement by Sonic 3D on Saturn, and Sega is less than happy there wasn't a flagship title out for 1996. Sega WON'T let that happen again in 1997. Sonic Extreme was canned because it didn't push the hardware or gameplay idea of Saturn as far as Sega would like. They know the only direction to go in is full, fast 3D.

MOISTNESS RATING: Moist

CONDEMNED

Fergus McGovern's pet project down at Probe. It's a cross between Descent and Doom, and since Descent is now cancelled on Saturn, that's welcoming. Players — and the emphasis is only on multiple human player participation — explore a series of 3D pipes and chambers, all decked out in lovely hi-res industria. The weapons and vehicles are being worked out at the moment, but the principles are mayhem and firepower, plus exquisite control.

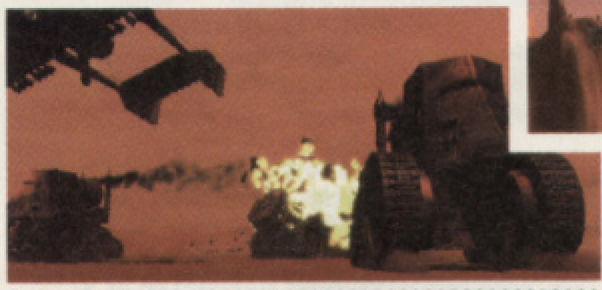
MOISTNESS RATING: Wet

HMS DREADNOUGHT

The major work at Ocean's in-house team, Tribe. The Saturn version is 'on'. Set on Mars, this is being designed as a global 3D shoot-'em-up involving steam-driven contraptions which mix Victoriana, Monty Python and Dune influences. Interesting to see how it comes on.

MOISTNESS RATING: Dry









SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

Treasure's first Saturn game, Guardian Heroes, was cool but we KNOW they can do much better. Silhouette Mirage is the name of the strange, dumpy new hero of their outlandish action adventure project. We are very interested.



MOISTNESS RATING: Misty



Looking to next year's Christmas hits, the roster is going to look even better than the line-up suggested here but hard facts won't be forthcoming until the Spring shows. Hence our collection of question marks, half-truths and bare-faced naked inventions.

TOMB RAIDER 2

This is as cettain for next Christmas as Santa Claus. We know work is underway, with Core moving fast to construct a team with members from the first game and new talent drafted in. All new areas are being developed, with the first two scenes suggested being Venice and the Titanic! The game engine is being altered to improve in two areas; taking Lara outdoors for exterior scenes, and improving the fighting element, with perhaps hand-to-hand combat in addition to shooting. We will get everything we can on this as soon as we can.

MOISTNESS RATING: Drippy

AQUA

A Scavenger game, which seems to maintain their customary trademark of jaw-dropping graphics. Aqua is set, as you might expect, entirely underwater. Scuba divers battle each other, infiltrate submerged bases and wet their wet suits when encountering large pieces of aggressive sea food. The water medium gives ample scope for amazing lighting and wibble effects.

MOISTNESS RATING: Leaky









TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP







We don't know who is doing Touring Cars for Saturn but it's unlikely to be AM Annexe. High ranking Sega officials are touting arcade conversion projects around at present, and UK developers are on their itinery. It won't come as any great surprise that this is down to be the big racer for next year.

MOISTNESS RATING: Dewy

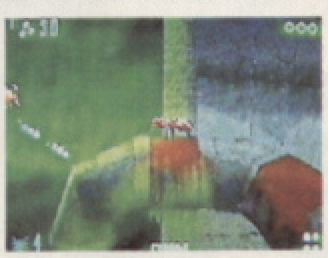


BLADE RUNNER

This has huge hit potential for Virgin, as only one previous Blade Runner game (for home computer) ever appeared, and it's appeal continues to grow. Nothing about the game is known, apart from the fact it's being done by Westwood Studios (creators of Command and Conquer/Red Alert) and they are the BEST. There is always a strong strategy element to their games, which fits into the movie plot of tracking Replicants around a grimy, futuristic city. We hope they get the flying adverts in.

MOISTNESS RATING: Droplets

SPIDER



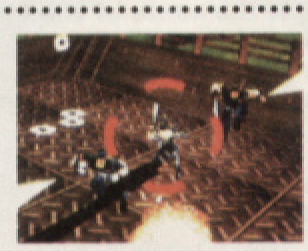
Boss Studios have made this their showcase product for BMG, and the scenario is promising. You pilot a super-slick mechanoid spider through the dangerous places where creepy crawlies and vermin like to hang out. Our office, for example. With the first spider in history to have homing missiles, and everything 3D rendered, it might almost be worth the interminable wait.



MOISTNESS RATING: Neutral

GUNBLADE NY





More Virtua Gun action, but this time from the dynamic vantage point of a helicopter, spinning through the New York streets with abandon. The explosions are BIG, and the prospects for a Saturn version are very good.

MOISTNESS RATING: Misty

ALSO COMING...FANTASTIC FOUR...BATMAN AND ROBIN ...ZOIKS!...GRANDIA...TERRA PHANTASTICA... SHINING THE HOLY ARK....DARKLIGHT...ARCHER MACLEAN'S SPACE...BLACK DAWN...AIRS ADVENTURE...SPANISH BLOOD... TARANTULA...TERMINUS...AND MANY, MANY MORE!

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Consider yourself a video games expert? Just how much do you know about Sega and Saturn? This trivia special we've put together should go some way to challenging your memory banks. Score one point for each correct answer.

1. What is the name of the dragon in Panzer Dragoon 2?

2. Legend of Mystaria changed its name from the Japanese version which was called what?

3. What is the name of the new female member of the Virtua Cop team?



4. Who is the Executive Producer at Sonic Team?

19. Which VF character says 'Better run home to momma, now!'?

20. Name the sponsor for the Toyota Celica in Sega Rally?

21. How many player characters are there in Loaded?

22. Who trained Akuma in the Street Fighter series?

23. Who was the baddie in Desert Strike?

31. What is the magical energy in Magic Carpet called?

32. How many characters can you play in Guardian Heroes?

33. What lands on the Princess at the end of Earthworm Jim?

34. How many of the original Mortal Kombat characters survive in Ultimate Mortal Kombat?

35. Which Worldwide Soccer '97 team features names from MEAN MACHINES staff?

36. Who is the biggest character in X-Men: Children

THE GREAT S



5. Who was the charismatic CEO of Sega of America until July of this year?

6. What is the best-selling UK Saturn game to date?

7. What is the name of the hero in Landstalker?

8. Who is the Tomb Raider?

9. Which character in VF2 produces the 'Surprise Exchange'?

10. What Fighting Vipers character is an 'Enthusiastic Fighter'?

11. What is the first zone of the first Sonic game called?

12. What game has music entitled 'The Dragon Gave a Loud Scream'?

13. What is the name of the female Virtuaroid in Virtual On?

14. Which AM division produced Baku Baku?

15. Which pharoah features in Exhumed?

16. What happens to Laura in D when she sees a beetle?

17. In last year's Saturn telly ad, what game does the Valkyre play?

18. In Daytona USA, who is carved into the wall on 777 Speedway?

24. Which VF character appears in Virtua Cop and Virtua Cop 2?

25. What are the four race systems in Wipeout?

26. What is the name of the crime syndicate that created Dural?

27. What number of Model board is used in Virtua Star Wars?

28. Which sponsored character was removed from the UK version of Fighting Vipers?



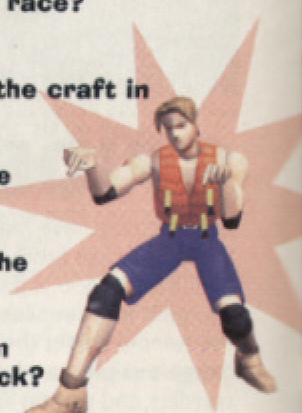
29. Where is the last level of Tomb Raider situated?

30. What town do Claris and Elliot come from?

of the Atom?

37. How many cars take part in Daytona's 777 Speedway race?

38. What is the name of the craft in Blam! Machinehead?



39. Which band fronts the dreadful Revolution X?

40. What's the name of the dwarf in Golden Axe?

41. What creature lives in Earthworm Jim's backpack?

42. In which game would you play Armadon?

43. How many years has Heart of Darkness been in development?

44. Who would you be if you could perform a Scorpion and Drill?

45. What is the first event in the Athlete Kings' Decathlon?

46. What island is Sonic 3D set on?

47. Which of these old arcade games did Sega not produce; Spy Hunter, Up 'N' Down, Tapper, Frogger, Mr Do!?

48. What does Sega stand for?

49. Who is Joe Musashi better known as?

50. Yuzo Koshiro composed the music to Story of Thor. What Megadrive series of games also bears his famous compositions?

62. What directive is issued before you race in Daytona USA?

63. Who is NiGHTS alter ego and enemy?

64. If you were a Blood Angel, which game would you feature in?

65. Which planet does Sonic live on?

66. On which game does Gary Bloom commentate?

67. Larcen Tyler and Jetta Max are two members of what dismal fighting troupe?

80. Who is the hero from Flashback?

81. The first ever commercially produced video game was...?

82. How could you play Megadrive games without ever buying a cartridge?

83. Which of these has never been an arcade game; Pebble Beach Golf; Baku Baku, Athlete Kings; Panzer Dragoon?

84. Who developed Saturn's main sound processor for Sega?

85. In Japan there is a fishtank simulator for Sega Saturn. True or False?

86. How many Phantasy Star RPGs have there been?

87. Name one game advertised on Saturn over the Christmas period?

88. Who is the programmer of Aladdin, Cool Spot and the founder of Shiny Entertainment?

89. What colour was the prototype Saturn?

SEGA TRIVIA QUIZ



51. What other game do the characters from Bust-a-Move 2 appear in?

52. Which platform character is apparently also a movie star?

53. Where is Birdie's stage set in Street Fighter Zero 2?

54. How do yobs travel to your Theme Park?

55. What is the worst game ever reviewed in MEAN MACHINES?

56. Where is Tokio's stage in Fighting Vipers?

57. What game uses a twin-stick control method?

58. What Japanese beat-'em-up was the first to use the 'Dual ROM' system?

59. What animals graze on the first course of Sega Rally?

60. What creature can you race as in Daytona USA?

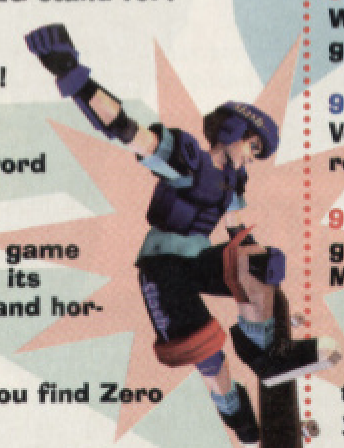
61. Where is the first track set in the awful Destruction Derby?

68. 'The marks on your forehead are like the stars in the sky'. Whose marks?

69. In what game does raising the sugar level increase profits?

70. What does MPEG stand for?

71. No udder racing game got cows! Which game has?



72. Sega's three word motto is...?

73. What Mega-CD game outraged MPs with its scantily-clad girls and horror overtones?

74. Where would you find Zero Space?

75. Who is Pepperachou better known as?

76. Your adventure starts on a large ship. What adventure?

77. Virtua Racing on Megadrive had something in addition to every other cartridge. What was it?

78. Who use banana bombs and exploding sheep to achieve their aims?

79. You are in a library with two books containing two brothers begging for coloured pages. Where are you?

90. What is the name of the Megadrive in America?

91. If you played Treasure's Alien Soldier, what would you spend most of your time fighting?

92. It was called Deadalus in Japan. What was this Saturn Doom-style game called here?

93. If you finish Fighting Vipers in Very Hard Hyper Mode, what is your reward?

94. Which controversial sports game was reviewed by MEAN MACHINES in 1996, but never released on Saturn?

95. What Sonic game was sensationally suspended earlier this year?

96. What is the capacity of a Saturn CD-ROM?

97. What is the name of Sega's preschool learning machine?

98. What does the acronym 'RPG' stand for?

99. From which country does Lion Rafale originate?

100. What colour are the official UK Virtua Guns?

Phew, was that tough or what? Now turn to the news to check your scores and overall!

Bonus Question: Does anyone actually read these bits?

Only space for one First Look, but it's a big one for a big boy. No one dares laugh at Jonah's Tin-Tin hairdo or bum-fluff moustache, basically because he could kill them.

first look

Game Name	Jonah Lomu Rugby
Publisher	Codemasters
Developer	Rage Software
Release	

When Codemasters wanted a hero to front their new Rugby game, they tackled New Zealand's very own man-mountain, Jonah Lomu. They're thinking big in every sense.



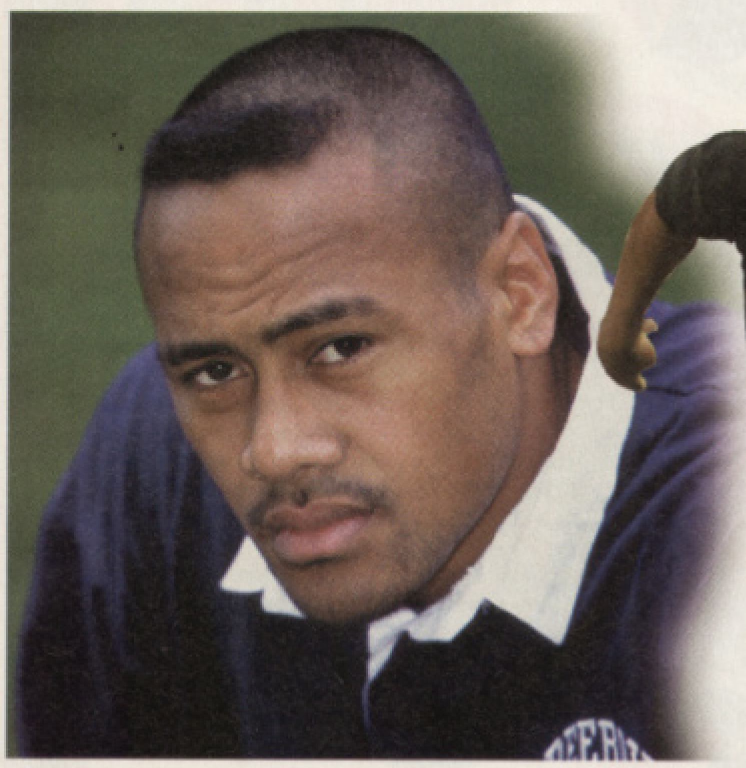






Rugby has been in the news periodically throughout 1996. The players went on strike, the League and Union started flirting for the first time in 100 years, the rest of the Five Nations booted out England, then took them back again. And there was the small matter of the scrummage involving the Captain, the Big Breakfast presenter and the Queen of Hearts.

JONAH LOMU RUGBY





Not one rugby game, though. Football games coming out of our ears, but Britain's second most popular team game is still unsupported, as it was for years on the Megadrive. At least someone has been developing one — Rage software in Birmingham are working with Codemasters to create the first 32 bit rugger simulation.

The game bears the weighty (19 stone) endorsement of Jonah Lomu himself, New Zealand's youngest ever International, and the instant star of the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa.

Codemasters have always aimed to get big names to back titles in their Sportsmaster range — Pete Sampras for tennis, Brian Lara for cricket, Ernie Els for golf, but possibly no one is bigger than Lomu.

But let's face it, it's the unsung heroes at Rage who are going to make or break the game. Even though they will have no competition in the market when it's released in April as Rage boss Trevor Williams points out: "We want to make this the best rugby video game ever. We could have just bashed it out, but neither we or Codemasters wanted that. The time that has been added on to the original deadline shows how we're not rushing any element of the gameplay. The scrum, for example has had five different models to make it work in play. We've scrapped them all, for various reasons. That's a month of work, I suppose, but we want to get it right".



A BIG BIT ABOUT CODEMASTERS

Codemasters was formed in 1986 by two brothers, Richard and David Darling, who were responsible for their first budget titles on Commodore 64. Later the company found success on the Amiga with a series of platform games based on Dizzy, their egg-shaped mascot. Codemasters moved into 16 bit consoles, with its own facilities to produce cartridges — an idea that went down like a lead balloon with Sega and Nintendo. Sega made peace relatively quickly, and the Megadrive went on to enjoy some classic Codemasters games. Nintendo and Codemasters' partner in the States, Galoob spent years in court — and eventually Codemasters won a huge $40million payout. Those golden Megadrive years saw the creation of the Micro Machines series, and later the Sportsmaster range. Two huge titles from that range; Brian Lara and Pete Sampras defied the pundits and topped the Megadrive charts for months on end. Codemasters is changing its image again, with next generation titles attracting as much attention for their graphics and presentation as their legendary playability.



A LITTLE BIT ABOUT RAGE

Rage now claim to be Britain's biggest independent developer now that Probe has been acquired by Acclaim. They have five development centres, including Birmingham and Liverpool, and over a dozen titles on the go. Rage do lots of bread and butter conversion and commission work — recently for Time Warner and FIFA '97 conversions for EA. Like many developers in this situation, they have to cope with the time scales allowed and the quality of the source code provided. The Striker soccer games have probably been their biggest hit to date.



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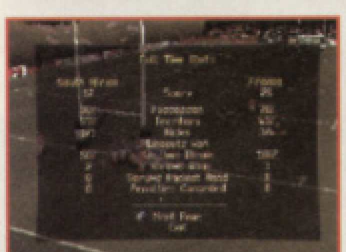


4



5





Complete team stats, international squads and the big man himself.

Yeah, we know these are PSX shots but the Saturn game is identical.





ALL WEATHER PITCH

Dynamic climate conditions (commonly known as weather) is also a feature of the game being worked on at the moment. Matches don't just operate under one weather condition — rain showers can be intermittent. Antonio demonstrated the lightning effect for the stormy setting, which cleverly uses light-shading effects to cause realistic flashes across the pitch of different reflective intensity. Some of the most entertaining rugby can take place on a sodden pitch, which Rage are allowing for. The mud thrown up by scrums and tackles even soils their shirts!



10 FACTS ABOUT THE LIFE OF LOMU

1. Jonah is actually Tongan by nationality, though he was born in Auckland, New Zealand.

2. He was born on 12th May 1975, and weighed 11 pounds at birth.

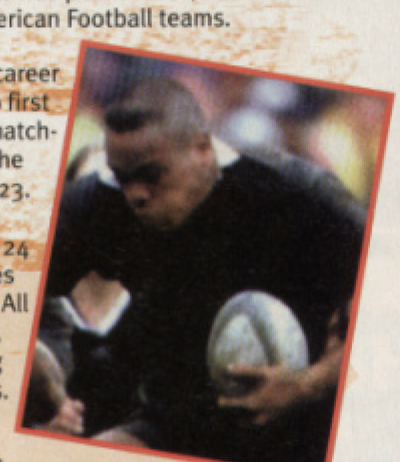
3. Jonah was the youngest rugby International ever for the All Blacks when he played his first test: New Zealand Vs France in 1994, at the age of 19.

4. He won trophies at school for his sprint running — a factor that makes him a deadly winger. He can run 100m in close to ten seconds.

5. Before he made his impact at the World Cup, he was considered a poor defender and left out of the New Zealand squad for several matches!

6. When he went to the World Cup in 1995, he worked as a bank clerk.

7. Wigan, England's top League club, offered £500,000 for Lomu to join them. But that was peanuts to $1m+ bids from US American Football teams.



8. His career lists 60 first class matches, at the age of 23. He has played 24 matches for the All Blacks, scoring 17 tries.

9. He made a Pizza Hut ad where he was tackled by the mother of two of the England team who bore the brunt of his World Cup performance.

10. Lomu statistics: 6ft 5in 19 stone; 50in chest; 20in neck.



Blimey, Have you felt the force of Jonah's tackle?





STRUCK FROM THE RECORD

Rage's experience on their previous hit, Striker has been useful for Lomu. The game's programmer Tony McCabe and the Saturn programmer Antonio Argentieri worked on the 32 bit versions of Striker. The lessons they learned about the machine technically, and about the speed and gameplay mechanics have influenced Lomu. Tony also worked on a SNES Rugby game which Nintendo passed over in the UK, But Rugby presents problems of its own: "In football you only need one player model, but in Rugby there are all the different set-pieces; scrums, mauls, passing plays. You have to have a control model and intelligence model for each". The set-up of a Rugby team is also more complex for the programmers: "A rugby team has specialisation. You won't get wingers moving into the scrum unless they really have to, so we've programmed them to avoid getting into situations which don't suit their style of play. The game engine is just about there, a lot of the time we have left will be spent working on the player intelligence".









NAMES OF THE GAME

Without signing any other license apart from Lomu, the national teams feature the correct player names in their positions that will please rugby fans, with Codemasters checking the legal position first. So England fans find Carling, Guscott and Moore, Aussies will have Campese on their side and the Scots will be able to play with the inimitable Gavin Hastings, even though he retired last season.

"We know this", answers Tony, "but since he's a big recognisable name, we left him in". Jonah Lomu Rugby will only feature national sides — 47 of them, from the masters of the southern hemisphere; Australia, New Zealand and South Africa; to some lesser knowns like USA and Singapore; all the teams of Europe's best regarded league — the Five Nations; and a good selection of the Pacific island nations — Tonga, Western Samoa and Fiji. There are no league sides, as they found it a struggle to find enough relevant international sides. Also, they want the game to be a global product — interest on the Continent and in Japan, an emerging rugby nation, is high. The game's tournaments don't bear the title of 'World Cup' or 'Five Nations', but the structures are the same.



THE TECHNICAL DEMANDS



Saturn programming is in the hands of one man, Antonio Argentieri, who is taking code from the concurrent PSX and PC development and adapting it, making the most of the Saturn hardware. Weighing out the pros and cons, he expects to produce the best version of the game: "When I was doing Striker last year, we only had the early American libraries used for the first lot of Saturn games. Now I'm using the Japanese SGL stuff which is really hot. The improvement on the early development tools is huge".

The scale of the teams places a burden on the CPU: "You have to be able to cope with 33 animated characters on screen, including the referee, so we haven't used polygons. Luckily, the Saturn allows me to have all of these in 256 colours, and I can blur the textures so they appear detailed close-up. I hear from other programmers about effects the Saturn can supposedly do, but a lot of people, even at Sega, don't know how to make them work".

TEAM TACTICS

Jonah Lomu won't have the acres of strategy screens that have become the norm in football 'simulations'. Tony explains: "You are hindered by the rules. You can't go changing formations in the scrum, for example. The rules are set out that you must have three heavy forwards in your scrum. It's a matter of safety". But while you won't make tactics selections on a screen, they will be worked into the AI programming: "We're working on how the team members use each others abilities. That's the basis of getting good at the game – recognising the strengths and weaknesses of each position. The computer does that as well — it will pass to a kicker if it wants distance or try and guide you into bringing your players into the ruck just to create more space in the field for a running play".





American Football? Pah! Rugby is a 'real' man's game!



GAME ON!

Rugby, we put to Trevor Williams, is one of those sports everyone knows the basics of, but doesn't quite understand all the rules. He agrees: "Yeah, we had that in mind when we started work on the project. We wanted a game that stayed true to the rules, but was easy to pick up and play without a complete understanding of all the ins and outs. It's definitely turned out as an arcade style game — lots of movement and simple controls. We also thought it important though, that all the rules were in there, and people who know the game will think it's an accurate simulation of the sport. The game is being put together by people who know the sport and how they want it to come across. One of the team has been studying the rules".

Tony chips in: "We've had to consider that the rules of the game are changing at the moment — until six weeks ago it wasn't possible to make a substitution in Rugby, but that has now changed. So we want to keep up with changes in the sport for Jonah Lomu".

One of the problems the game offers is it's stop-start nature. The game stops for long periods as players form scrums or the ball goes out of touch. Tony explains how that is being dealt with for an arcade sports game: "Rugby can be a bit slow, and previous video games have suffered from that. We took the view that people wanted an active moving game, so we try to avoid the ball going out of play where possible. There are far fewer scrums than the average rugby game, as we don't really see the point in continually stopping the game for that. There's the experience of some football games where it takes ages to take throw-ins as the camera repositions itself etc., when all the player wants to do is restart the game again".

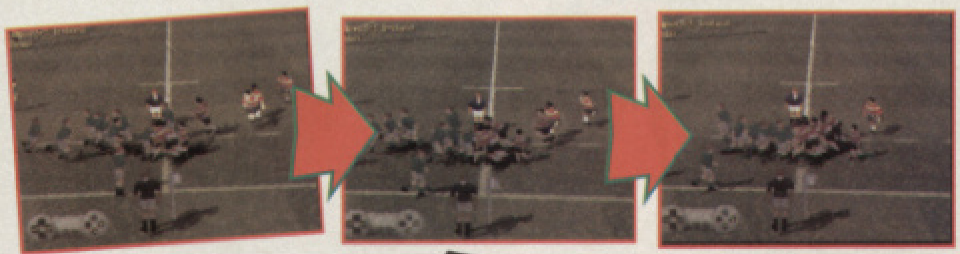
The area that Rage wanted to concentrate on was the contact side: "We analysed all the different parts of the game; scrums, rucks, passing and running. We felt that previous games had concentrated too much on passing, making the game like football.





The contact part of the sport — the rucks — didn't give you the feeling of control over ball. The systems we've developed for rucks allow the player to get right in there, by pulling players into seize possession. They can summon nearby players in automatically, or take direct control of each one and bring them in. The control is simple and fast, but the effect is pretty sophisticated — the speed and strength of each player entering the ruck is calculated to see how it moves it. This dual idea of accessibility, but enough sophistication for long term play, works its way through the whole control system: "We offer two types of passing — short passes to the nearest player and longer passes that allow you to switch wings or outflank defences. Initially, players will get used to executing passes and getting the timing right, but over time they'll work out tactics where long and short passing is more effective.

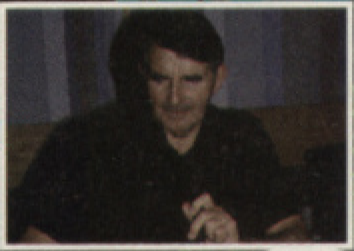






TEAM MACLAREN

Codies have signed the Scottish burr of veteran Rugby Special, commentator Bill Maclaren. Bill has recorded over 3000 words, phrases and player names includin some real mouthfuls from sides like Zimbabwe and Ivory Coast. Also some funnies. The current favourite is 'it's hot, it's humid and it's sticky!' Well, you've got to be there.



RUN VT

The replay option works better in rugby than it does in football, as long runs ending in tries look excellent. A nice touch added here is the effect of lines of interference when you forward or rewind the 'tape' at high speed.



THE BIG OCCASION

The game sets out to capture the atmosphere of big match rugby. Four rendered stadiums have been created, ranging from the simple stands of an African test ground, to massive tiered stadiums that rival Twickenham and Murrayfield. Work is going on to produce a crowd who react to play by unfurling their teams national flags and letting off fireworks. For the sound effects, Rage bought the copyright to a recording of a 1995 international played at Twickenham, and it sounds excellent, including a rendition of 'Swing low, sweet chariot'.



We can hardly believe we're FINALLY gettiing to review Dark Saviour. So we made it a bit of a special one. Also, Ocean's Tunnel B1 exceeded our initial expectations. Not everything pitched to these heights, though...

review

Game Name	Dark Saviour		
Publisher	Sega		
Release	Febuary	Price	44.99
Game Style	Action RPG		
Import? ✕	Linkplay? ✕	Players	1
Control	Joypad		
Background	Two years of development from the creator of Landstalker.		

Crime and Punishment, the Spy Who Loves you. Weighty matters for a platform game. But then, Climax are no ordinary coders and Dark Saviour is no ordinary platform game.



Garian's friends have tried to dissuade him from a hazardous mission. The world's most dangerous monster, Bilan is being transported to Jailer's Island, the only environment secure enough for him. Tales are told of Bilan's ability to degenerate the cells of his victims, leaving them to die a hideous slimy death. Despite the safety precautions and the escort of the most respected Bounty Hunters from Rajeen, it's a journey that fills Garian with fear. Garian retires in a bid to get some rest, and is overtaken by troubled dreams. In them, the monster escapes and wreaks carnage throughout the vessel. Klaxons blare as the horror dawns. Garian wakes with a start in the reassuring confines of his cabin. But the alarms are still sounding...







MYSTERY ISLAND

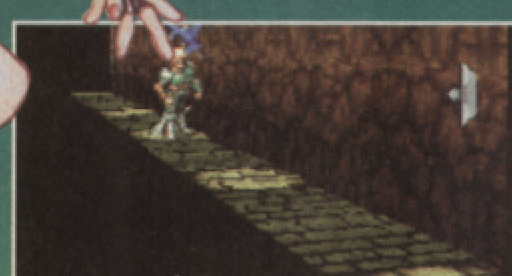
The stories weaved in Climax games are humorous, bizarre and far less predictable than average RPG fare. Themes of Politics and Ethics find their way into the thoughts and speeches of characters. The central character, Garian, has to balance his respect for order and authority, to the plight of those under it. The Warden Kurtliegen has megalomaniac plans which he executes under the protection of his position, and the political differences of Garian and Kay stand between friendship and mutual assistance. Plus, there are a few jokes in there as well.





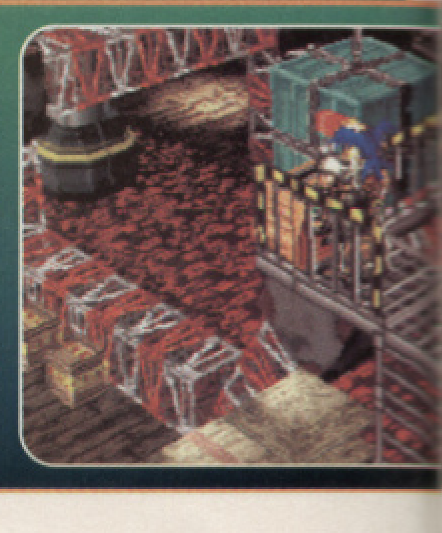
GARIAN'S QUEST

The Jailer's Island is a series of open air landscapes and buildings all depicted from an isometric perspective. Each landscape can cover a large cubic area and the landscapes are linked by doorways, lifts and tunnels. Garian has to do as much jumping as walking to cross lava lakes, swamps and chasms, making Dark Saviour as much a platformer as an adventure game. If he slips fatally, all is not lost. He is faithfully followed by a blue bird mate called Jack, who will retrieve him and return him to a set point in the landscape. Jack extracts a price though which is deducted from Garian's bounty hunter points. If Garian has no points, it really is Game Over.









ON ICE
Garian's ability to push certain kinds of blocks, including ice is demonstrated in the cold store areas of the ship.



WINDOWS
Some areas can only be reached by using exterior gantries accessed by the windows.



SHORT CUT
A little ingenuity allows you to reach the top deck quicker by using a series of platforms attached to the side of the ship.







THE SHIP
Bilan is loose on the vessel, and making his way with bloody purpose to the Captain's quarters. Garian must rise through the decks to reach this room on the top deck before Bilan can escape. The basis of selecting the story through the Parallel Plot system (explained later) is found in this opening Ship chapter.

THE BIG FIGHT
Being a bounty hunter, Garian has to contend with all manner of wise guys out to prove they are tougher than him. Dark Saviour has its own one-on-one battle mechanism which comes into play in these situations, and it's styled rather like a simplified beat-'em-up, played over the best of three rounds. Garian has a small selection of slashing sword lunges, and a devastating special attack he must power-up by storing attack energy. Each of his enemies has their own form of conventional and special attack.



BATTLE CAPTURE
Capture opportunities are a neat slant on winning battles by finishing moves. Pummel an opponent to within an inch of his life and a flashing capture symbol appears. If you can respond by finishing the bout within seconds with a special attack, the character is captured. You can call upon his services when you go into battle with access to all his attack powers.





Review

The Climax artist is a bit good isn't he?

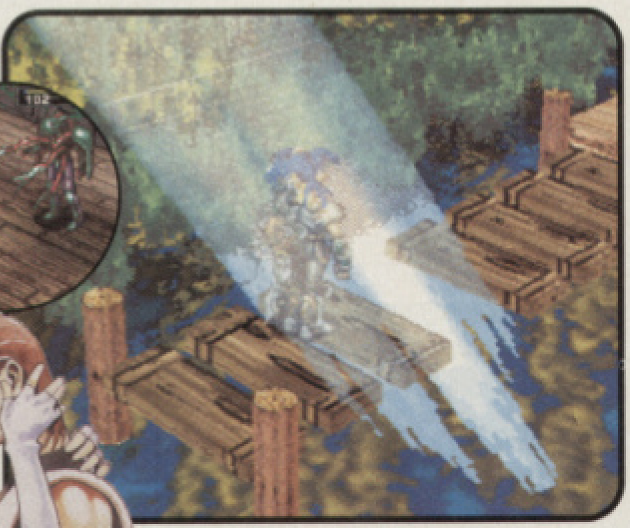
TRAVELOGUE TO JAILER'S ISLAND

Jailer's Island sprawls over a wide area, encompassing the official zones controlled by Kurtliegen, the secret areas run by the renegade JLO and the mysterious mining operations for metal and Bilanium. Become acquainted with your surroundings.



JJ TOWN

The area outside the prison proper, including the port and guard's quarters. In the Jalopeno Juice bars and the streets around them, a strange atmosphere persists, but no one will talk about it.





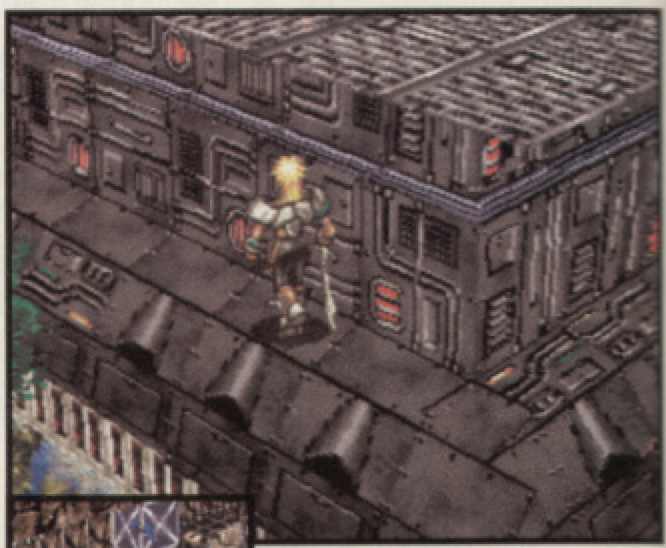






DEATH VALLEY

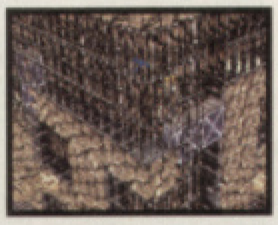
This place of ill omen is out of bounds to town residents and prisoners and accessed by only one route. It consists of a large swamp linked by a

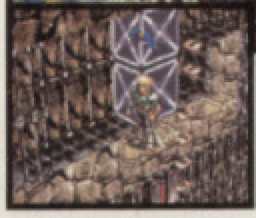


DEATH WALLS

Formed at the far end of Death Valley, these sheer walls house switch mechanisms that allow them to be scaled, and buzz-saw mechanisms to protect them.







The JLO

The nerve centre of activity against the authorities and a place to return to for help. The JLO also has a secret way into Kurtliegen's castle.



DEADMAN'S CASTLE

This huge edifice forms the major part of the first parallel, and its levels house several key areas:

LAB

Where Kurtliegen's unscrupulous scientists conduct their experiments.



TORTURE CHAMBER

Undesirables are taken here for correction, under the eye of Lance, once a bounty hunter friend of Garian.





BATTLEMENTS

High walkways link the upper levels of the castle together.





REBEL TOWN

Escaped inmates and JLO members live underground in a seedy settlement riddle with factions and mutual distrust, but here lies the key to further exploration. Access to it is ingeniously disguised.





PRISON YARD

The high-security inmates mill around this area, but are reluctant to reveal their allegiance to the JLO



MEAN 16

ORY· MAIL· Q&A·TIPS· GUIDES ·DIRECTORY· MAIL· Q&A·TIPS· GUIDES ·DIREC

Happy New Year readers, and welcome to the meaty MEAN MACHINES SEGA Mean 16 column! Being the hard-working video games journalists that we are we've spent the last month down the pub working out what our New Year's resolutions shall be. Steve is going to spend less time looking at rude pictures on the Internet, Matt has told us that he plans to lock his girlfriend in a cupboard so he can play his Saturn more. As for Jason and Nick, well they've decided to become writers as well so the mag finally gets finished on time. Gus, our leader and mentor, has simply opted to spend more time sitting out on the fire escape making smoke signals to his fellow Scotsmen in London. As for me, I'm gonna be hunting high and low to bring you the latest tips, cheats and hints to keep you well busy in '97. Send all your Tips and Questions to: MEAN 16, MEAN MACHINES SEGA 30-32 Priory Court, Farringdon, London, EC1R 3AU.

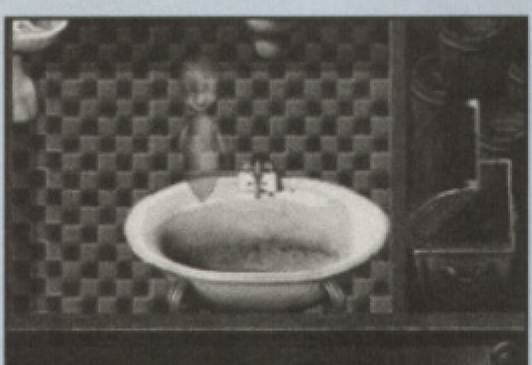


SATURN TIPS

CASPER

DEFEAT BOSSES

Casper, the over-friendly ghost, is Interplay's sickly sweet interactive movie tie-in featuring the capers of a cute corpse and his three devious dead uncles. Here are some essential tips for beating the boss ghosts.



1. Fatso near kitchen. Feed him hamburgers.

2. Stinky. Spray perfume on him.

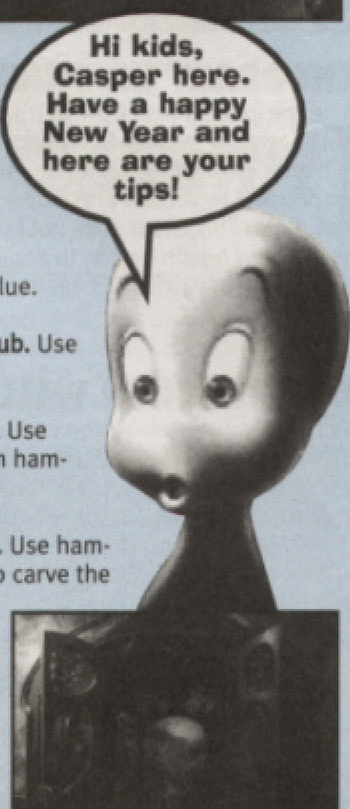
3. Stretch. Use glue.

4. Fatso in bathtub. Use camera.

5. General Fatso. Use wind-up key then hammer the tanks.

6. Farmer Stinky. Use hammer and chisel to carve the stone in Casper's image.

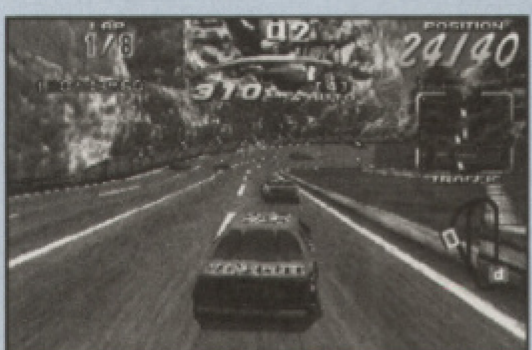
7. Graveyard Stretch. Use twister morph to lure him into grave dig site.



DAYTONA CCE

TIPS GALORE

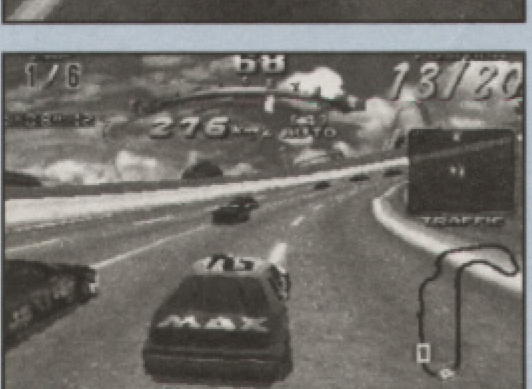
Right then boy racers, here are the first handful of tips for Sega's much improved driving sequel, Daytona CCE. If anybody has any more please send them in, there could be a free Saturn game in it for you!



ROCKET START:

Whilst on the starting grid of the Advance or Expert courses, hold **C** (brake). Now hold **B** (accelerate), keep your RPM's between 6500 and 7000 and when the green light shows let go of the **C** button for a speedy getaway.





DRIVE OLD DAYTONA BLUE HORNET CAR:

Win all five tracks in HARD mode and the nifty Blue Hornet motor becomes accessible.

CONTROL UMA (Horse):

This was one of the first cheats we tried to discover and thankfully Sega has once again saved place in Daytona for loads of hilarious horseplay. To access this nifty nag place first in all five tracks on Hard mode.





MIRROR MODE

This one was sent in by Jason Penfold from Surrey, proving that the best tips are always discovered by our plucky readers first!
On the course select screen hold down **X, Y, Z** then press the **C** button to select one of the backwards courses.

Akuma in SF Vs X-Men? Press Up on the selection screen.

VIRTUA COP 2

BIG HEADS

Wow, an exclusive Virtua Cop cheat and the game's been out for less than a month! To make all of the characters head's bigger simply play the game more than 58 times (Check the Book-Keeping screen to see how you're doing). Then after 58 plays the big-headed baddies are yours to point at and laugh!



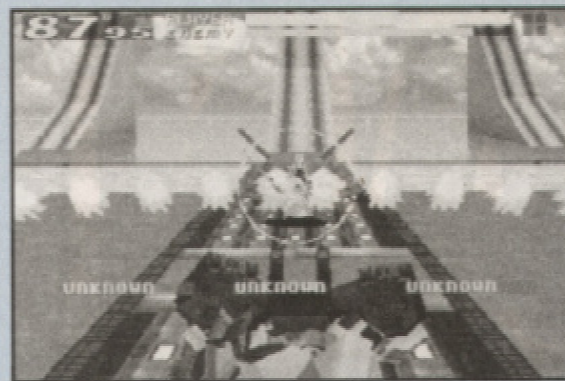
Virtua Cops with Big Heads? Yep, and there are even more secrets to discover...

VIRTUAL ON

CONTROL JAGUARANDI

Here's something I found whilst playing AM3's awesome robot fighting game. To play as the ultra-hard sub-boss, Jaguarandi, play the game through on its Hardest level setting and beat the final boss, Z-Gradit.





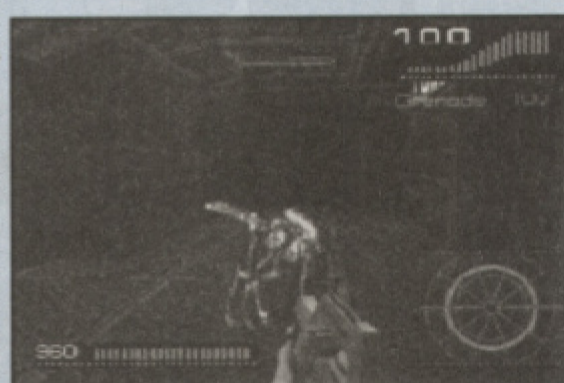
Jaguarandi is just one of the hidden characters to discover in AM3's Virtual On.

ALIEN TRILOGY

BITCHIN' CHEATS

Here are some codes straight from our friends at Acclaim. Enter these on the password screen.

1. JUMP LEVELS: FLYTO?? (Replace ?? with the level you wish to start on)
2. INVINCIBILITY: FVNKYG1BBON
3. MAXIMUM WEAPONS: F1SH1NGFORGVNS
4. MAXIMUM AMMO: F1LLMYPOCKETS

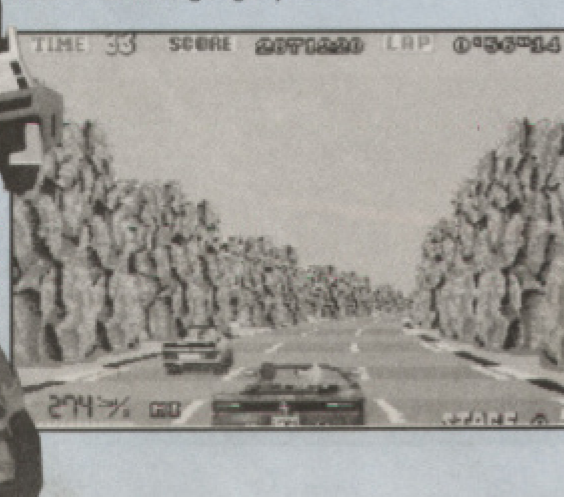


Those Alien Trilogy cheats just keep coming! Use these codes to aid in your fights.



OUTRUN

To access a secret Cornering option which lets you increase your grip, hold the **A** + **C** buttons and go into the options menu. The additional extra should now make driving slightly easier.



MEGA DRIVE TIPS

X-MEN II: CLONE WARS

Q&A ANSWER

Congratulations go out to Phil Grant from Oxon this month as his question kicks off the first regular Q&A section of this column. I have listed the 99 lives cheat that you requested plus some other useful stuff as well. Remember folks, keep those tips letters coming in!

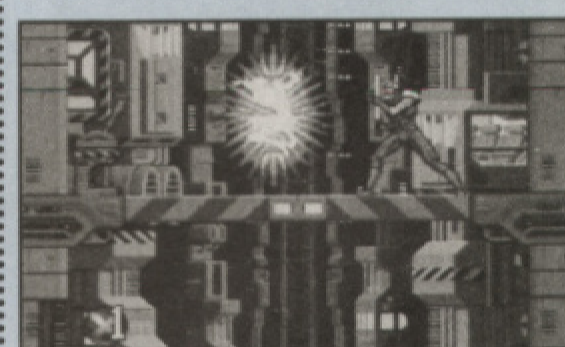


99 LIVES

Pause the game then press: Down + **C**, Up, Left, Up, Right, Right, C.

LEVEL SKIP/CHARACTER CHANGE

Pause the game. Press Left + **C**, Up, Up, Left, Down, Down, Right, C. If done correctly, you will hear a laser blast. Unpause the game, then pause it again. Hold Right + **C** to skip the level. Hold Left + **C** to change characters.



TEMPORARY INVINCIBILITY

Pause the game. Press Up + **B**, Up, Right, Down, Up, Right, Down, Down, Up, **B**. If performed correctly, you'll hear a crashing sound. Unpause the game, then pause it again and press Up + **B** to activate the cheat. Note: This cheat does not last the entire game. If your health begins to deplete, press pause then Up + **B** to reactivate it again.

WALK THROUGH WALLS

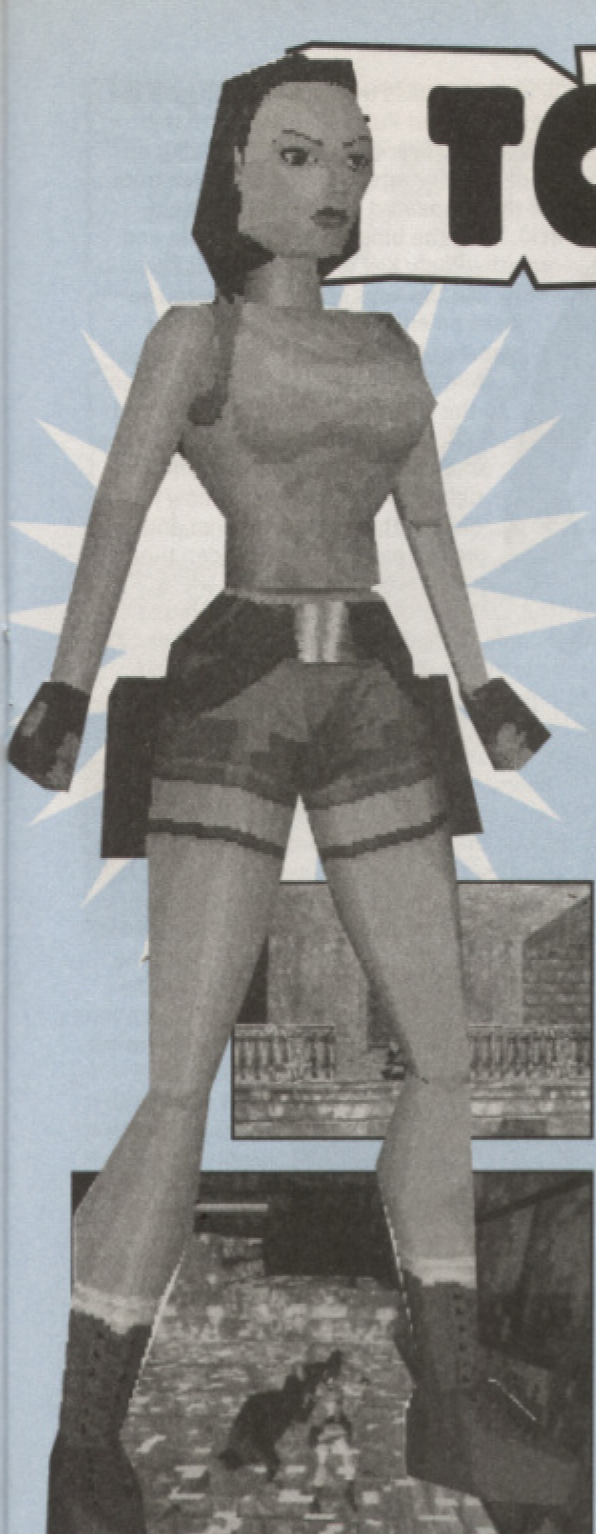
This trick requires a 6-button controller. When the SEGA logo appears, hold Mode + **X** + **Y** + **Z**. When the title screen appears, press the following sequence quickly: Up, Up, Down, Down + Left, Left, **A**, **B** + **C**. At this point, the screen will flash and you'll be able to walk through walls by holding the Mode button.

NEXT MONTH

More amazing Virtua Cop cheats such as extra options, mirror mode and how to beat the bosses!

TOMB RAIDER

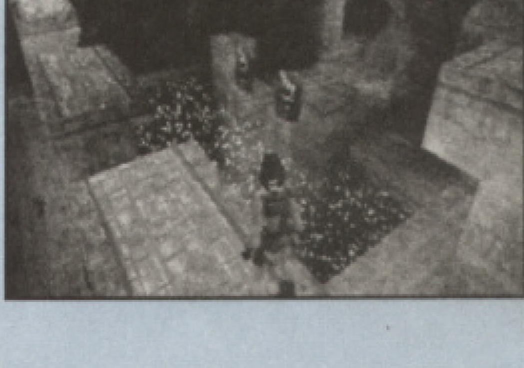
TIPS AND SECRETS PART 2



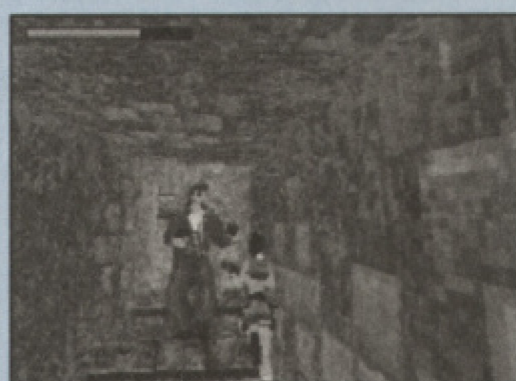
Welcome to the second part of the Mean 16 Tomb Raider tips guide. Last month we adventured through the Lost Valley, uncovered the Tomb of Qualopec and battled through the Colosseum where we finally finished in the Palace of Midas. Grab your pistols, bring some Medi Packs and let's set off on our second outing with the lovely Lara...

THE CISTERN

Dispose of the rat and push the block forward twice. Then place the block under the switch so that Lara can activate it. Enter the white door to find a large Medi Pack ,then jump down to the

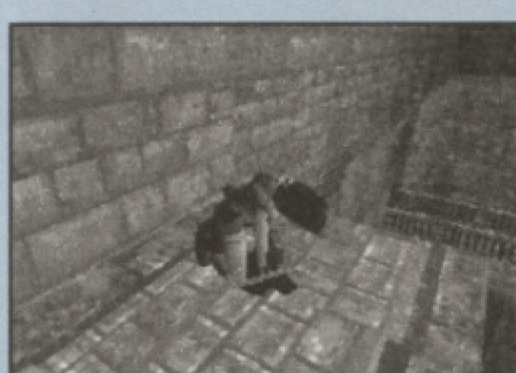






bridge. Jump to the ledge on the right (just past the guardrails), follow the path then jump to the crevice and shuffle left along it. Drop onto the next ledge and pick up the shotgun shells, then grab the second crevice and continue shuffling left and climb up the next ledge. Run to the end to find the first Rusty Key. Run back and drop down to the brick path, once on the path climb up to the first Save Beacon.

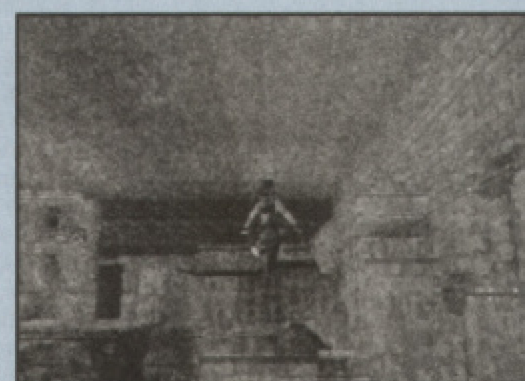
Turn right and jump over to the ledge and run up the stairs to meet the gun-totting Pierre





Depont. Turn right and jump onto the ledge and around the corner: a small Medi Pack can be found. Turn right and jump to the ledge, the next ledge contains a large Medi Pack and some shotgun shells. Jump down to find a couple of holes in the floor, any one will take you to the water. Swim down and find the tunnel, surface and pull yourself onto the ledge. Follow it round to find the second Rusty Key, but watch out for the rats. Run forwards and grab the ledge, shuffle left until you come to a second ledge, jump and slide down the slope toward the Save Beacon.

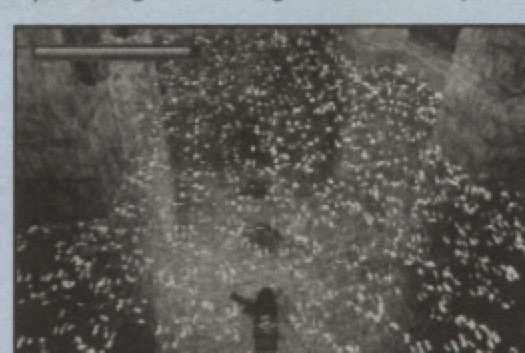
From the second Save Beacon, run forward and slide down the ramp to the statues, shoot the crocs. Climb back up the ramp and jump left to the bridge. Travel to the other side of the room and scale the wall then climb the ledge on the right. Walk along the ledges then jump down to reach the set of ridges with guardrails. Jump over to the platform on the right, turn left and jump to the door, open it using one of the Rusty Keys. Climb up and shoot the two apes, jump over to the next platform. Shoot Pierre Dupont until he flees. On the next ledge lies a Large Medi Pack, once collected Lara should





make her way up to the highest ledge. Hang on to the crevice, shuffle right and drop into the hole, shoot the crocs and rats then save your game.

From the third Save Point, make your way up to the ledges above and hang onto the crevice shuffling right towards the white door. Jump into the green hole and climb to the top of the stairs in the room with the golden door. Use the ledges on the right to find the switch which opens the golden door, grab the Silver Key and



Crocodile at six 'o clock. Steady, aim, shotgun. Blow 'em all away. Ha, ha.

run back to the bridge with the guardrails. Pull the switch to flood the level, and return to the main chamber. Swim down and find the small tunnel, follow the light to find a Small and Large Medi Pack, grab the Shotgun Shells then save your position.

Swim through the door in the water, grab the second Silver Key and swim back to the main chamber. Open the right-hand door and jump in the water, swim down to the tunnel and find the

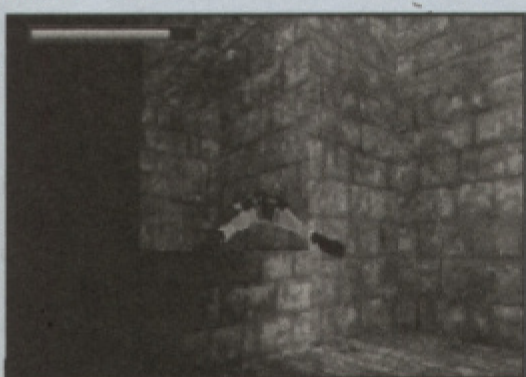
Small Medi Pack and Gold Key. Go back to the main chamber, shoot the croc and open the door by the guardrails using the Silver Key and save your game.

Go to the lock in the wall, shoot the ape and open the door below using the Gold Key. Run to the back of the room (watch out for the lions) and pull the block backwards twice, behind the switch. Now pull the block away from the wall four times. Jump to the ledge and grab the Large Medi Pack and two Magnum Clips, then jump in the hole to finish.

SECRETS

1. Turn right at the first Save Beacon and jump over to the ledge. Run up the staircase and climb up the wall on the right side of the room. Climb up the ledges to find a Small Medi Pack, then run up the ramp and turn left to find a dark area. The top of the area contains some Shotgun Shells.

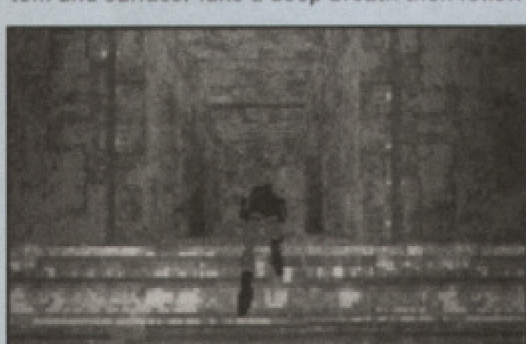
2. Jump into the water in the main chamber and find the two doors, look to the right to find a narrow tunnel. Follow it through to find some Magnum Clips.



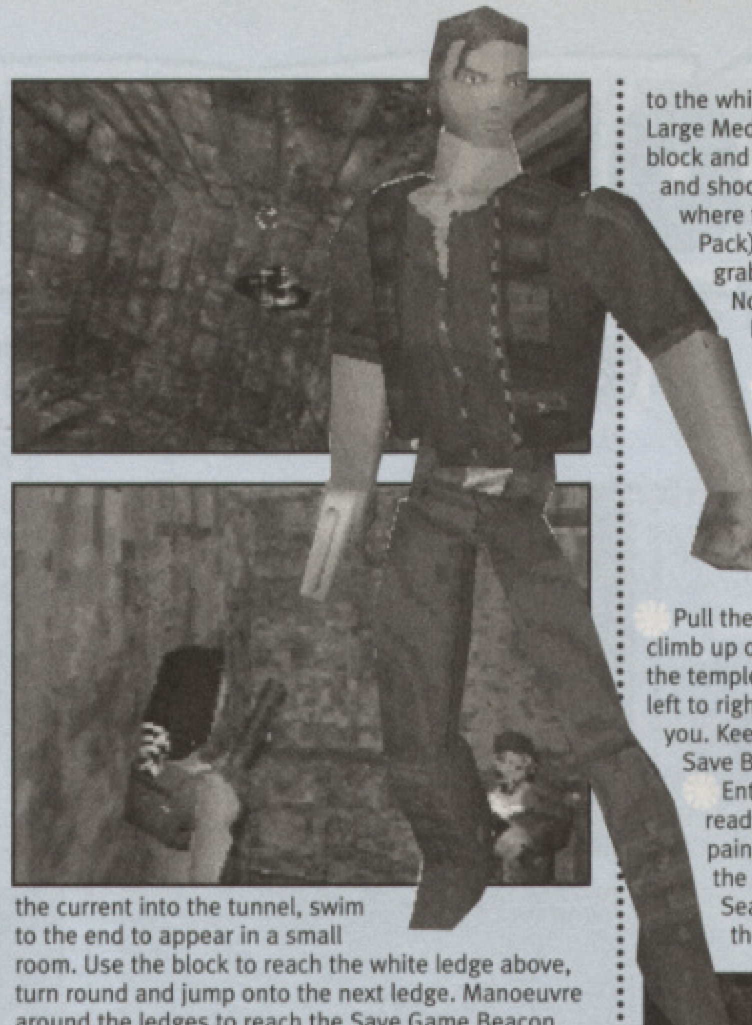
More underwater antics as Phil insists on grabbing pics of Lara's posterior. Just wait until his missus finds out...

THE TOMB OF TIHOCAN

Swim down until two tunnels are visible, swim into the lower of the two and pull the switch at the end. Swim back and move through the upper tunnel and climb out of the water. Pull another switch and enter the door on the right. Climb the stairs and jump to the ledge, pull yourself up onto the ledge to the left then make a running jump to the ridge in the left-hand corner of the room. Pull the switch at the end of the tunnel and jump back into the water. Run into the tunnel located at the top of the white block and enter the water, pull the switch at the bottom and surface. Take a deep breath then follow



Climbing up ledges is a handy of way of getting to places. It also makes for a boring caption, but what the hey.



the current into the tunnel, swim to the end to appear in a small room. Use the block to reach the white ledge above, turn round and jump onto the next ledge. Manoeuvre around the ledges to reach the Save Game Beacon.

Press on and watch out Pierre Depont, jump to the ledge behind the blade to find some Shotgun Shells. Get to the top of the pillar and jump to the ledge next to the swinging blade. Enter the door behind the blade, run down the stairs and grab onto the ledge. Shuffle all the way to the right then climb up and run down the tunnel to find a switch. Jump into the water and swim to the lowest stair next to the wall, shoot the rat and jump into the water. Navigate Lara through the tunnel and climb up into a new room



Arrows streak by in all directions as Lara tries to not to get skewered. The exit is just a jump away on the far side of the room.

(careful of the cougar), run into the tunnel and activate the switch. Return to the Save Beacon and save the game. Make your way to the crevice above then shuffle right. Enter the gate and pick up the Gold Key and Large Medi Pack. Return to the Save Beacon and enter the tunnel. Use the Gold Key on the lock, turn around and skip along the floating blocks. Grab the small Medi Pack and enter the door, walk into the room with the writing on the floor. Here Lara must pull the block backwards onto the etched tiles. Run around the corner, shoot the ape then enter the door and grab the Shotgun Shells and Magnum Clips. Walk back to the block and push it backwards onto another etched tile, shoot the second ape and grab the Shotgun Shells from the room. travel back to the main room and make your way up

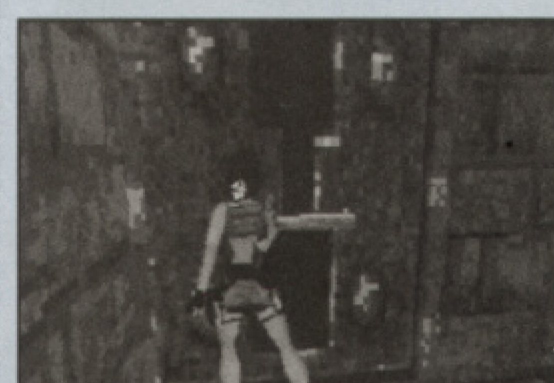
to the white door, pass the slicer and pick up the Large Medi Pack and Rusty Key. Return to the block and place it over the etched tile, climb up and shoot the four rats (run into the room from where they appeared to find a Small Medi Pack). Push the block over the last tile and grab the Rusty Key and Small Medi Pack. Now use the keys on the door with two locks on either side, then save your game at the beacon.

Slide down into the water and swim to the ledge. Run into the tunnel and climb upwards then slide down to the small ledge. Climb the cliff on the right and pull the switch, now jump back in the water and swim under the temple. Enter the hidden tunnel then save your game.

Pull the switch and jump into the water and climb up onto the sandy bank to the left. One of the temple guardians will spring to life, jump from left to right to avoid the fireballs being thrown at you. Keep shooting at it until it's destroyed, a Save Beacon will then appear.

Enter the temple and have your guns at the ready, as this is the final showdown with that pain in the ass, Pierre Dupont. Run around the area popping caps into him until he falls. Search his body to find the second piece of the Scion, Magnum Clips and a Large Medi Pack. Open the door using the Gold Key then read the hieroglyphics in Tihocan's Tomb to complete the level.





SECRETS

1. Run down the staircase past the slicer and enter the room. Look on the floor for three different textured tiles, step on all three to open a secret door.

2. From the third Save Beacon, jump onto the right side of the slope and hold the jump button to reach a hidden tunnel (watch out for the collapsing platforms). Walk to the edge so that Lara's right side is facing the room, now make standing jumps, forward, right, right, right, back then right to reach a secret room.

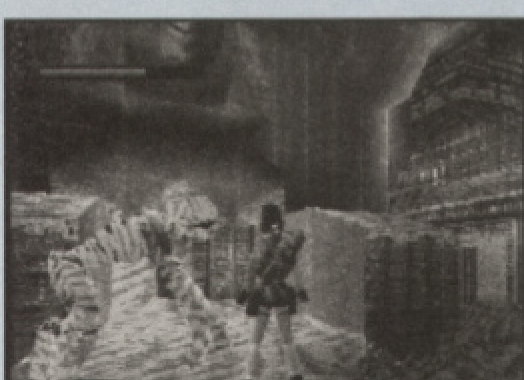


EGYPT

THE CITY OF KAHMOON



Drop into the pit then turn left and jump into the tunnel near dark block. Pull the switch and enter the doorway behind you, pull the block back three times and enter the tunnel, grab the Magnum Clips and Small Medi Pack. Walk behind the second block and pull it backward once, run to the other side of the block and pull it backward as far as you can. Then go to the other side and push it into the wall. Climb up to the ledge in the corner and shuffle right toward the cave (watch out for the panther). Climb up to the ledge on the left and pick up the Magnum Clips and Small Medi Pack. Jump back down and





shoot the mummy that appears by the Sphinx, then grab the two Magnum Clips at the bottom of the water. Climb up between the the palm trees and make your way to the tall pillar and find the Shotgun Shells. Climb up the left side of the Sphinx and pick up the Sapphire Key, save your position.

Pull the block between the Sphinx's arms back twice, enter the tunnel and use the Sapphire Key to open the door. When you emerge into a large room, climb the ledge against the wall and save (watch out for the panther).

Jump down into the hallway and grab the Large Medi Pack. Return to the chamber and trigger off the large boulder, jump out of the way and enter the water in the corner of the





room. Activate the switch at the end of the tunnel then swim through the door and climb up onto the ledge. Walk to the ledge near the gate and push the block forward twice and climb up to the Save Beacon.



Jump down to the ledge below the door, run up the staircase into the room. Climb up to the tunnel and activate the switch at the end. Return to the Save Beacon and pull the



block twice away from it. Pull the block once along the water's edge, jump over the block and push it twice. Climb up to the ledge with the block on it and shoot the mummy cat, enter the room and trigger the switch. Jump down and manoeuvre the block so that Lara can reach the golden ledge. Jump into the hole above and pull the switch in the next room, then run toward the silver gong and jump over to the far ledge. On the right-hand ledge Magnum Clips can be found, slide down the slope and pick up the Small Medi Pack. Go to the Sphinx's paw, jump over to the green ledge on the left then jump down and enter the door. Find the Magnum Clips and drop down to save your position.

Look down and dispose of the panthers, walk around and collect the Magnum Clip. DO NOT pull the switch in the corner as this will block your access to the third secret area. Enter the



A fence is in the way but thanks to the wonders of keys and locks, Lara won't be stuck for long.

two lit hallways and pick up the Large Medi Packs, run to the back of the room and look up. Against the wall a small ledge hidden in the shadows can be seen. Climb up and make your way to the bridge, follow the path and enter the room. Shoot the mummy cat and run up the hill to the next room, on top of the pillar a Sapphire Key is waiting to be collected. Run up the hill and jump along the ledges, pull the switch and go back to the entrance. Drop down and slide down the slope, open the door using the Sapphire Key, congratulations...



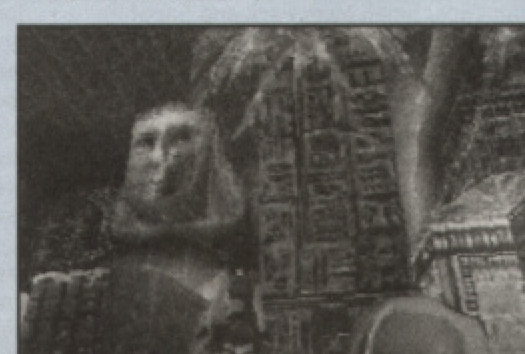




Lara tangles with a puma at the start of the Egyptian section. They're like lions but black. And harder. Eep.

SECRETS

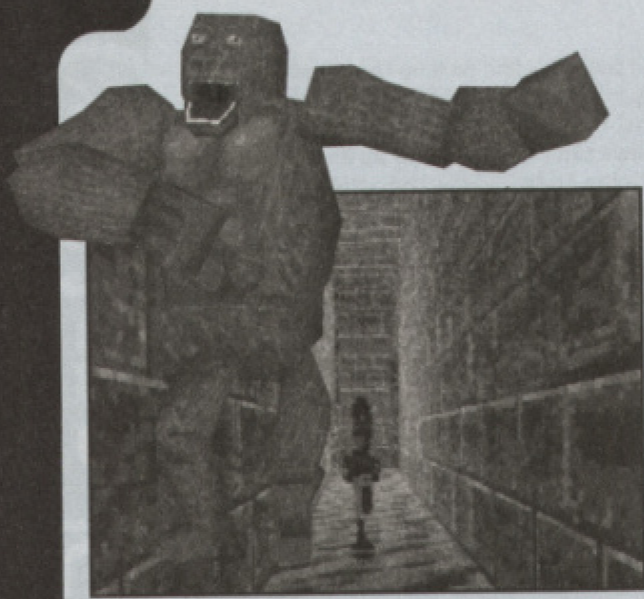
1. Near the large boulder, turn right and run toward the dark entrance. Climb the ledge to find a hidden room.





2. Go to the green ledge near the Sphinx and turn right, run up the slope pull yourself up to the highest ledge to find a secret area.

3. Run to the middle of the bridge (near the fourth save point) and keep to the left side of the ledge. Make a running jump over to the secret alcove in the corner.



THE OBELISK OF KAHMOON

Jump up the sandy hill into the hallway. Enter the large room with four pillars and run to the far-right block and pull it back three times. Shove it once under the gold door, run into the tunnel where the



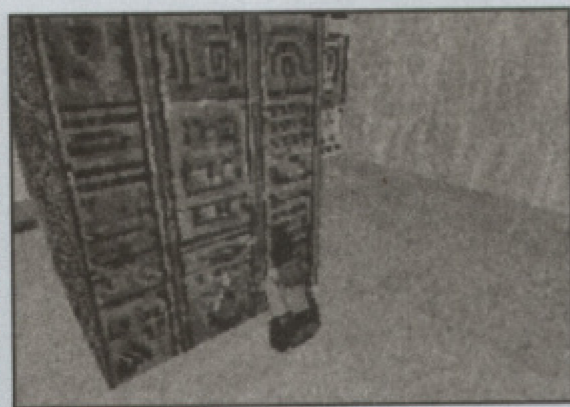
Guess what's happening here? That's right, Lara's tripped over her shoelaces. Or maybe she's just picked something up.

far right block was and shoot the panther. Grab the Small Medi Pack then return to the pillars, run over to the far-left block. Push it left once and jump into the water. Swim into a second room and pick up the Magnum Clips, Small Medi Pack and Sapphire Key. Return to the pillar room and enter the doorway in the corner of the room. Use the Sapphire Key to open the door, then climb up and enter the golden door to find a Save Beacon.

Run up the stairs shooting the mummy cat on the way, go to the far-left corner of the room and pull the switch to lower the door. Grab the Eye of Horus the drop down below the bridge and pick up the Shotgun



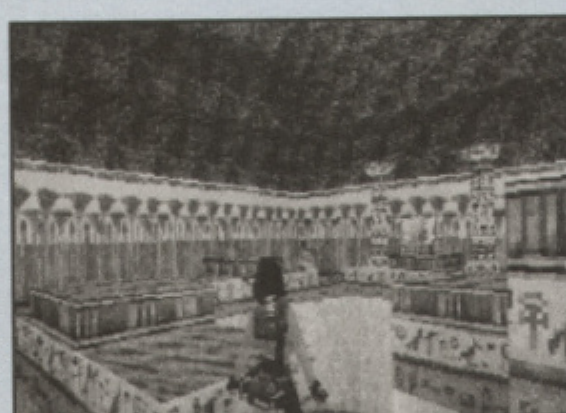




These huge blocks have to be shifted around to reveal the way to the Scion. Ready? One, two, three, hnnnnnnnng!

Shells. Jump into the water to find some Magnum Clips, swim to the surface and enter the hallway across from the golden door. Jump up and across the stone ledges to find the Save Beacon:

Reach the highest ledge in the room, then run up the stairs. Go down to the green plants on the ground and pull the switch next to them, walk to the ledge to the left of them. Drop down and pick up the Magnum Clips and Small Medi Pack. Climb



back to the staircase and run to the top. Fall into the hole in the ground, then run right into an alcove. Shoot the panther then pull the switch. Enter the doorway below and pick up the Magnum Clips. Return to the main room and run up the newly formed staircase, jump over to the ledge on the left to collect some Shotgun Shells. Continue up the stairs to find a save point.





Jump over to the fenced ledge, grab the Ankh at the end of the path. Return to the ledge and pick up the Large Medi Pack and activate the switch. Return outside and enter the door, run up the staircase then jump to the crevice on the right. Shuffle right then drop down to the ridge, walk around and drop down, at the end of the hallway lies a switch. Climb back up the stairs and shoot the mummy panther, pull the switch to lower a third bridge. Pick up the Small Medi Pack and run around the corner to find another switch. Run down the stairs past the pillars and look down for a white gong, jump down to it. Jump down to the ledge on the right then enter the doorway next to the green ridge. Climb to the stairs then grab onto the edge of the wall. Shuffle right then run into a large chamber. Make your way to the bottom using the ledges to find the Save Beacon.

Follow the hallway on the left to find a switch, once activated return to the mummy room. Drop down and run past the stairs to a ledge, climb up until Lara is standing on a green platform. Run across the bridge and grab the Scarab, jump over to the adjacent bridge to find the Annubus Seal. Dive into the water into the now open tunnel, pick up the Magnum Clips, Small Medi Pack and Shotgun Shells as you swim through the tunnel. Now surface to find the Save Beacon.

Follow the stairs from the left-hand door and shoot the mummy while standing on the large mound. Collect the Large Medi Pack and jump over to the staircase, drop through the door to return to the Sphinx's chamber. Use the four items to open the door which will end the level.



SECRETS

1. In the pillars room run to the end of the ledge and jump across the secret stone. A Small Medi Pack and Uzi Clips are waiting to be found.

2. Walk past the pillars once the third bridge has been lowered and look for a white gong on the end of a ledge. Run and jump to the secret gong to find a Large Medi Pack and two Uzi Clips.



Puma trouble again. Have you ever though about why Lara enjoys shooting endangered creatures? Neither have we.

3. Go to the top of the pillar above the white gong, jump to the gong and drop onto the ledge below. Enter the doorway next to the green ridge and climb the staircase then grab onto the edge of the wall. Shuffle right and pull yourself up to the ledge above. Jump to the ledge with a column and enter the secret tunnel to find a Large Medi Pack and some Magnum Clips.



NEXT MONTH

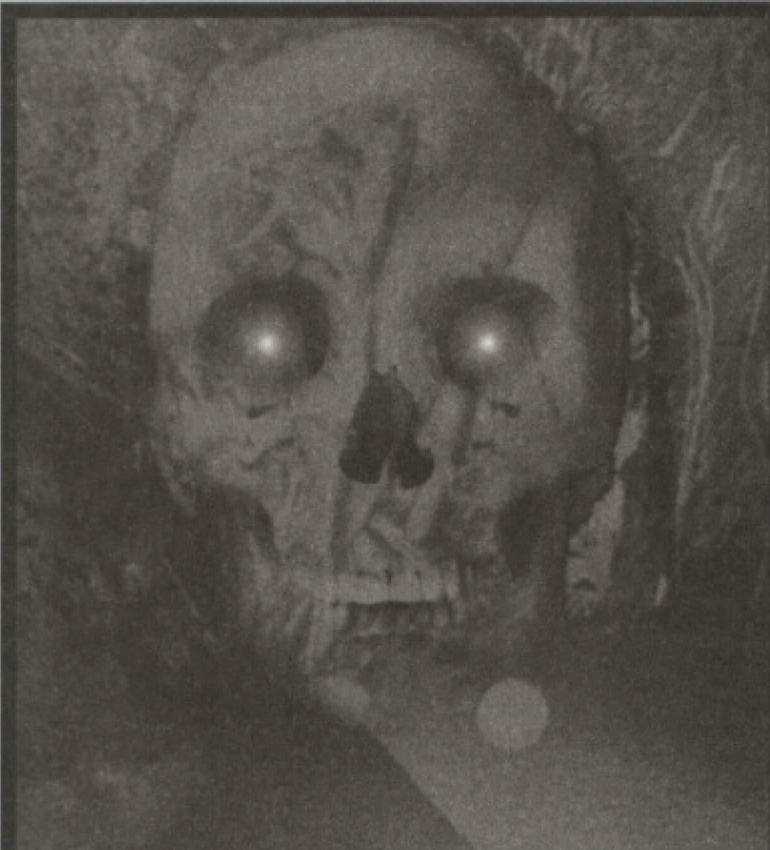
Well my fellow Tomb Raiders, next month we finish off the Egypt levels and enter the mystical world of Atlantis. So until then take a bath, restock on some food and wait for next month's awesome adventure. To be continued...

Exhumed

GUIDE PART 2

"Here we go again", sang Swedish one-hit wonders, Stakka Bo.

And indeed here we do go again, for it's the return of the fantastic MEAN MACHINES Exhumed guide and all the late nights and hair pulling-out it entails.



Exhumed gets put under close scrutiny once again.

RETURN TO THE AMUN MINES

If you read last month's installment, you'll remember being warned not to fall down a large hole halfway through the level. Now you have the Shawl of Isis, however, you can float down this hole and find the alternative exit that leads to the Cavern of Peril. If you weren't here last month and you've got this far on your own, I'm sure you're capable of finding the hole yourself. If not, try getting hold of issue 51 through our back issues department.

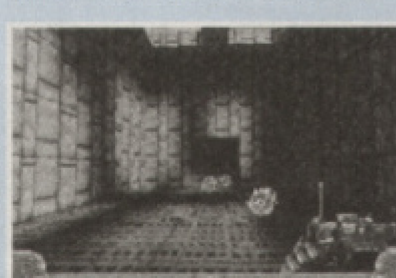




Baddies explode in a most artistic fashion.

THE CAVERN OF PERIL

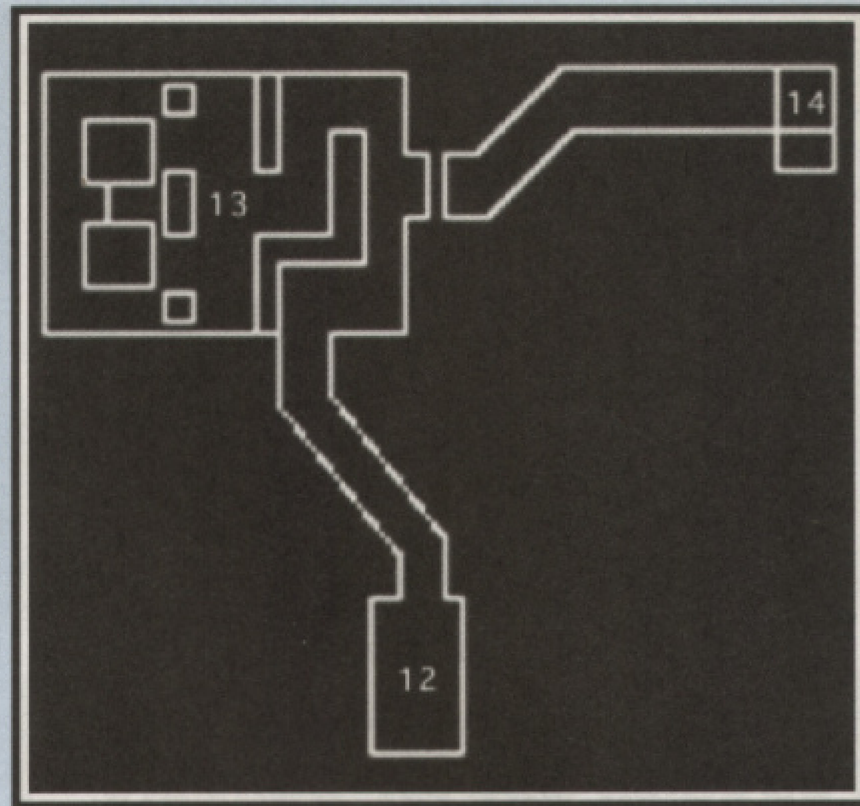
Getting off to a good start, this level proved to be virtually unmappable. It consists of five or six floors stacked on top of each other, which means that the in-game map is virtually useless too, so bear with us. As you start the level, you'll see a large pillar thing surrounded by a circular passageway that is littered with power-up jars. Shoot the skulls next to the pillar to blow a hole in it, then jump through the hole and use the B button to float down to the bottom. When you get to the bottom, you'll see the flame thrower to your left. As you pick it up, a door will open ahead and a handful of guards will emerge. Deal with them then turn around and head out into another circular passageway. Next find a corridor that slopes upwards to a door. Go through here and you'll find yourself on a tiny ledge over a lava pit. Down to your left are full health and weapon power-ups, then you need to jump to your right to continue. You'll shortly emerge on another ledge, and another jump to your right is the way forward. The next corridor ends on a swamp pit; you need to do a well timed running jump to get up the next platform on the other side of the pit. Turn around and look up to your left. You'll see another platform with skulls on it, so shoot them to clear it to enable you to jump up there. Turn around again and jump across to a corridor on the far side of the pit. This corridor ends on another ledge, this time over the shaft you floated down at the start of the level. Jump across to the other side and follow the corridor round until you reach a long line of jars, with a guard over in the distance. Using the pistol to get the neccessary presicion, shoot the skulls next to the guard to blow him, and the adjacent wall, up. There is another guard behind the wall, but he is an easy target with the pistol. As you kill him, fireballs start up ahead. Carefully avoid them and press on. Around the corner is a massive gap over a lave pit, and as you approach the edge, the wall on the opposite side will explode and a fireball stream starts up. So not only do you need to do a floating jump to get across, you also have to evade the fireballs. Once you touch



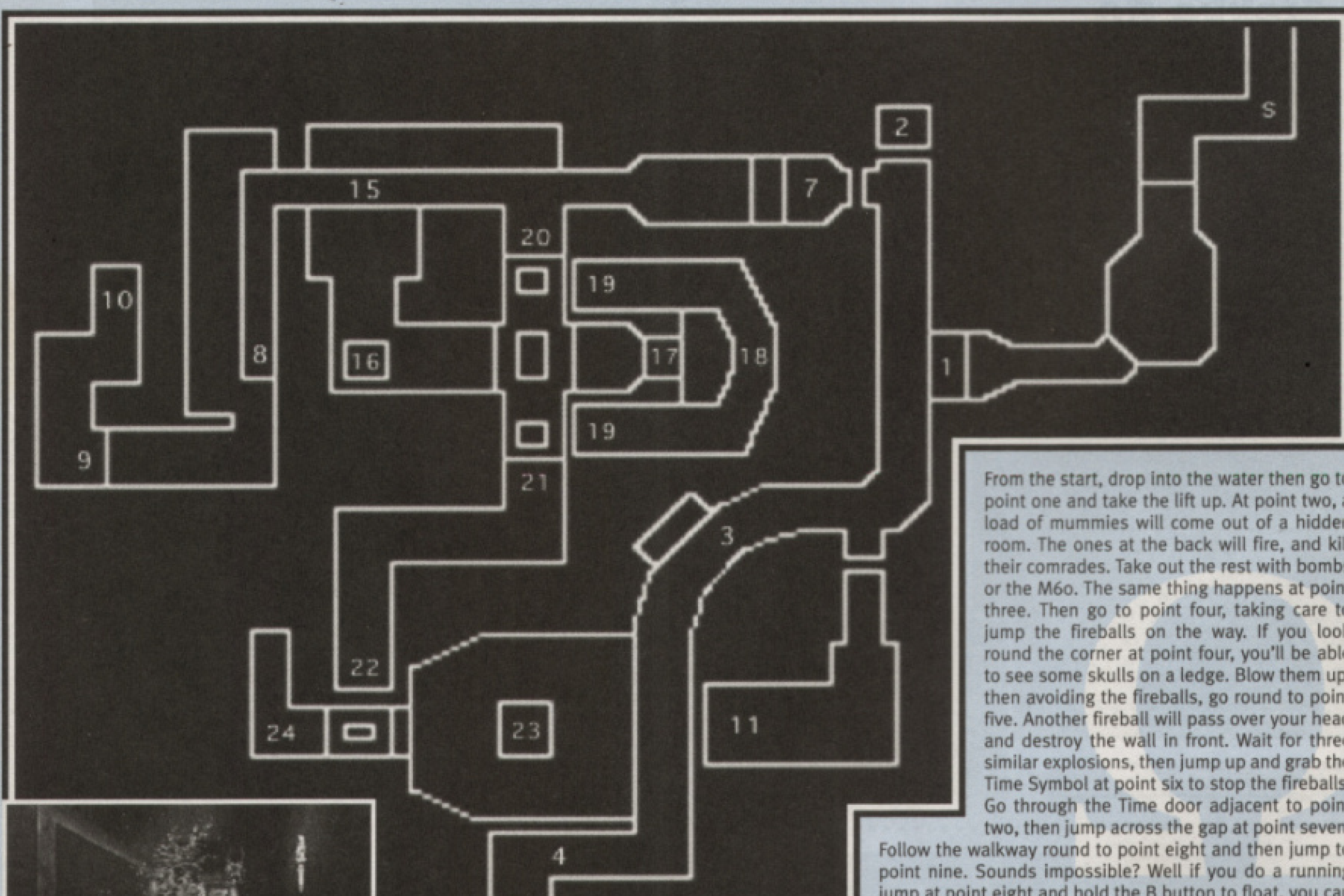


down on the other side, however, the fireballs stop. Run round into the next room and look up to your left. Throw bombs up to the bad guys on the steps, then jump up, avoiding the hole in the floor before the first one. At the top of the steps there is another gap to jump. You'll need to do a floating jump onto a small platform, the drop down to a platform in the middle of a swamp pit. Jump from here to another ground level platform, then up to your left to a platform with a door. From here it's plain sailing to a lift up, then across a bridge and through a door to the camel.





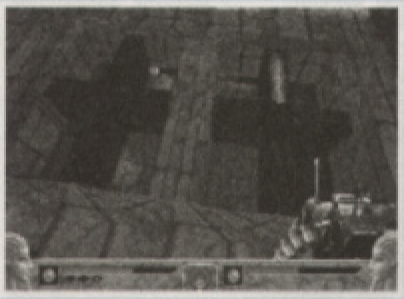
NILE GORGE



From the start, drop into the water then go to point one and take the lift up. At point two, a load of mummies will come out of a hidden room. The ones at the back will fire, and kill their comrades. Take out the rest with bombs or the M60. The same thing happens at point three. Then go to point four, taking care to jump the fireballs on the way. If you look round the corner at point four, you'll be able to see some skulls on a ledge. Blow them up, then avoiding the fireballs, go round to point five. Another fireball will pass over your head and destroy the wall in front. Wait for three similar explosions, then jump up and grab the Time Symbol at point six to stop the fireballs. Go through the Time door adjacent to point two, then jump across the gap at point seven. Follow the walkway round to point eight and then jump to point nine. Sounds impossible? Well if you do a running jump at point eight and hold the B button to float, you can steer round the corner and land at point nine! Then collect the Symbol of War at point ten and go through the War door to the big hole in the ground at point eleven. You'll need to float down this hole, and it helps to look down too, as there are several fireballs to avoid on the way down.

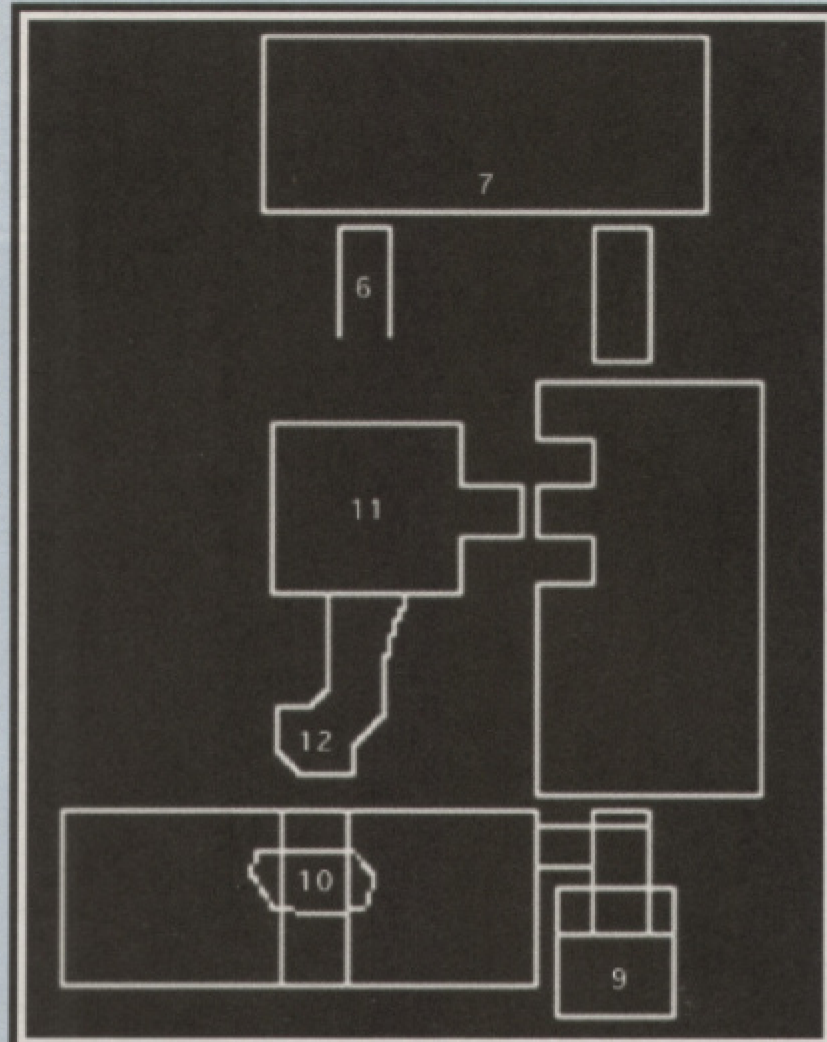
You'll land at point twelve on the second map. From here go to point thirteen and hit the switch there to lower the pillar ahead of you. Now go to the lift at point fourteen and take the door on your right. This brings you out near to point one. Next, go to point fifteen by way of point seven, then jump carefully across to point sixteen. Do a floating leap to get across to point seventeen, then jump again to point eighteen. Hit the floor pads at both point nineteens to drop the next two pillars, then jump into the water and swim back to point seven. There is an underwater passage that takes you back there, but we'll leve you to find it. Next jump across the gap from point seven again and go to point

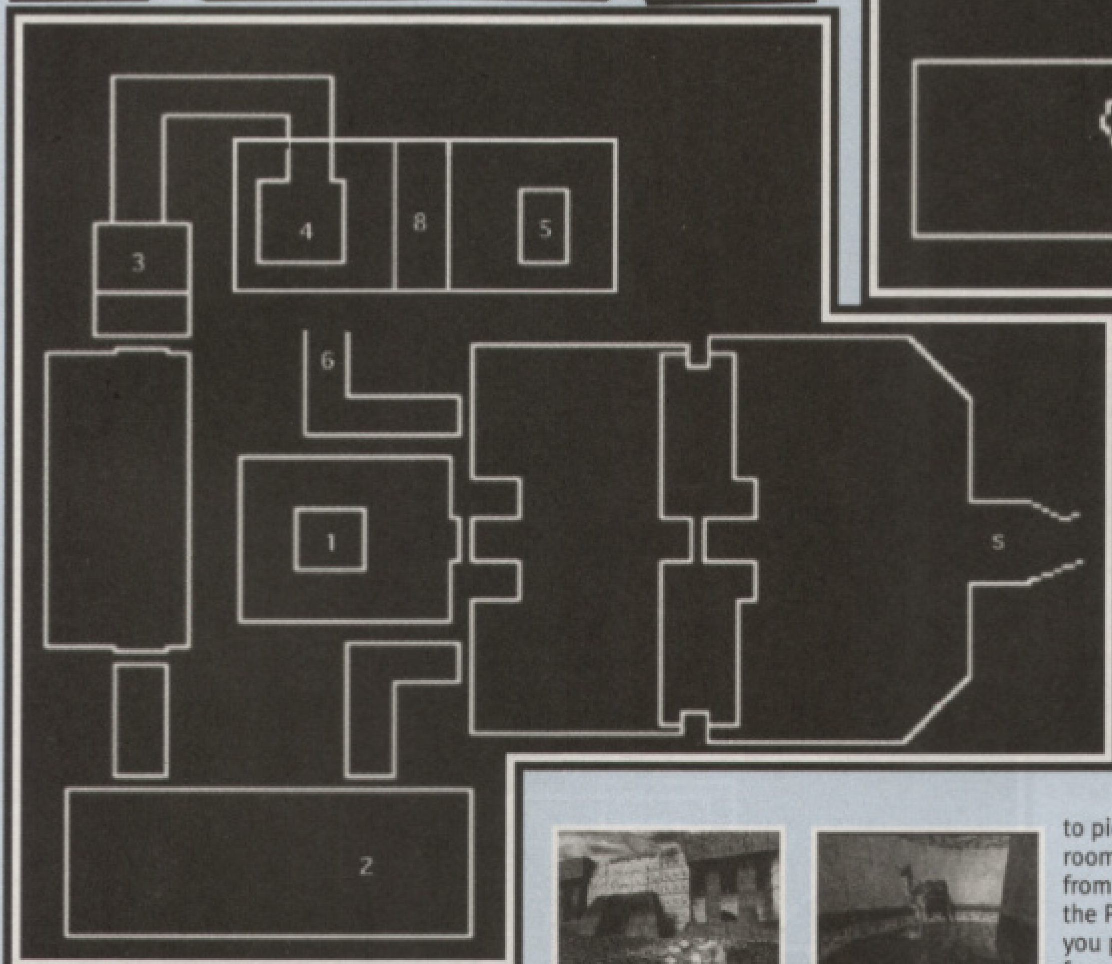
twenty. Do a floating leap across to point twenty one and then hit the floor pad at point twenty two to drop the final pillar. Go back via point three to point twenty three, which is located on a floating platform. There is a full health restore in a cavern to your right, but the exit is straight ahead at point twenty four.





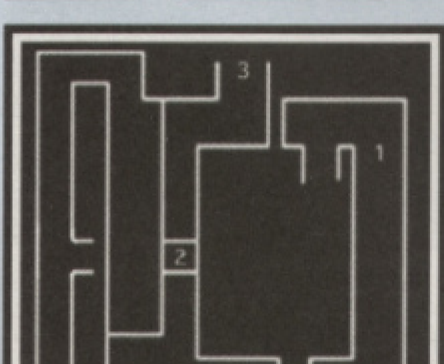
THOTH TREASURE RELIQUARY





This level serves as a bit of merciful relief after the last couple of blast-fests. Firstly collect the Symbol of Time from point one, then go to point two and shoot the skulls to your right to dispose of the mummies. Next make your way through to the lift at point three, which enables you to reach point four, a platform suspended over a large room. Jump across to point five and hit the switch there, then retrace your steps to the start of the level and go on to point six. On the second map, hit the switch at point seven to deactivate the laser traps at your next destination. Go back up to point four and drop down to the platform at point eight, where you will collect another symbol. Drop down again, back to point seven, and then work your way through to the lift at point nine. At point ten you'll see a large hold in the floor. Drop down here to pick up the last symbol, then drop down again into the room at point two. So retrace your steps again and go from point seven to point eleven where you can pick up the Protective Anklets of No One Imparticular. These give you protection from swamps, as well as partial protection from lava, and oddly enough you have to walk through a swampy bit to reach the camel at point twelve.

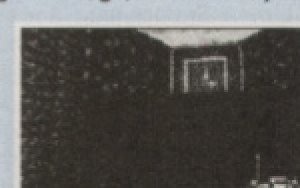
BACK TO YHE KARNAK SANCTUARY



Now you have the Proctective Anklets of Whatsisface, you can reach the second exit on the Karnak Sanctuary level. Go to point one, which is the corridor populated by spiders and and Annubis Guard. Then go to point two, kill the guard and the birds, and drop down into the swamp. Follow the winding swamp passage through to the camel. God knows how it got there though...

HEKET MARSH

Go forwards to a large pillar with a kind of grating on it. Throw a bomb at the grating to blow through it and pick up a full weapon restore. Throw another bomb to blast out the other side, then jump off the platform ahead, but hold down the B button and float down to another platform underneath which holds the Symbol of War. If you then jump into the water, you'll find an underwater tunnel that leads you back to the start. Surface here, then return to the pillar room and take the door on the left. Stop halfway along the bridge, and turn to your right so you can see a symbol on a ledge above you. You can now do what is technically termed as 'cheating'. If you angle your view down, then jump up and press B, you'll float down slowly. If you throw a bomb at the top of your jump, then the blast will force you up high into the air. Press forwards and you'll reach the platform straightaway. Beware though, as this technique drains some of your health. Collect the key, then turn left at the pillar room and float across the gap to the door. From here, fight your way through to the camel.

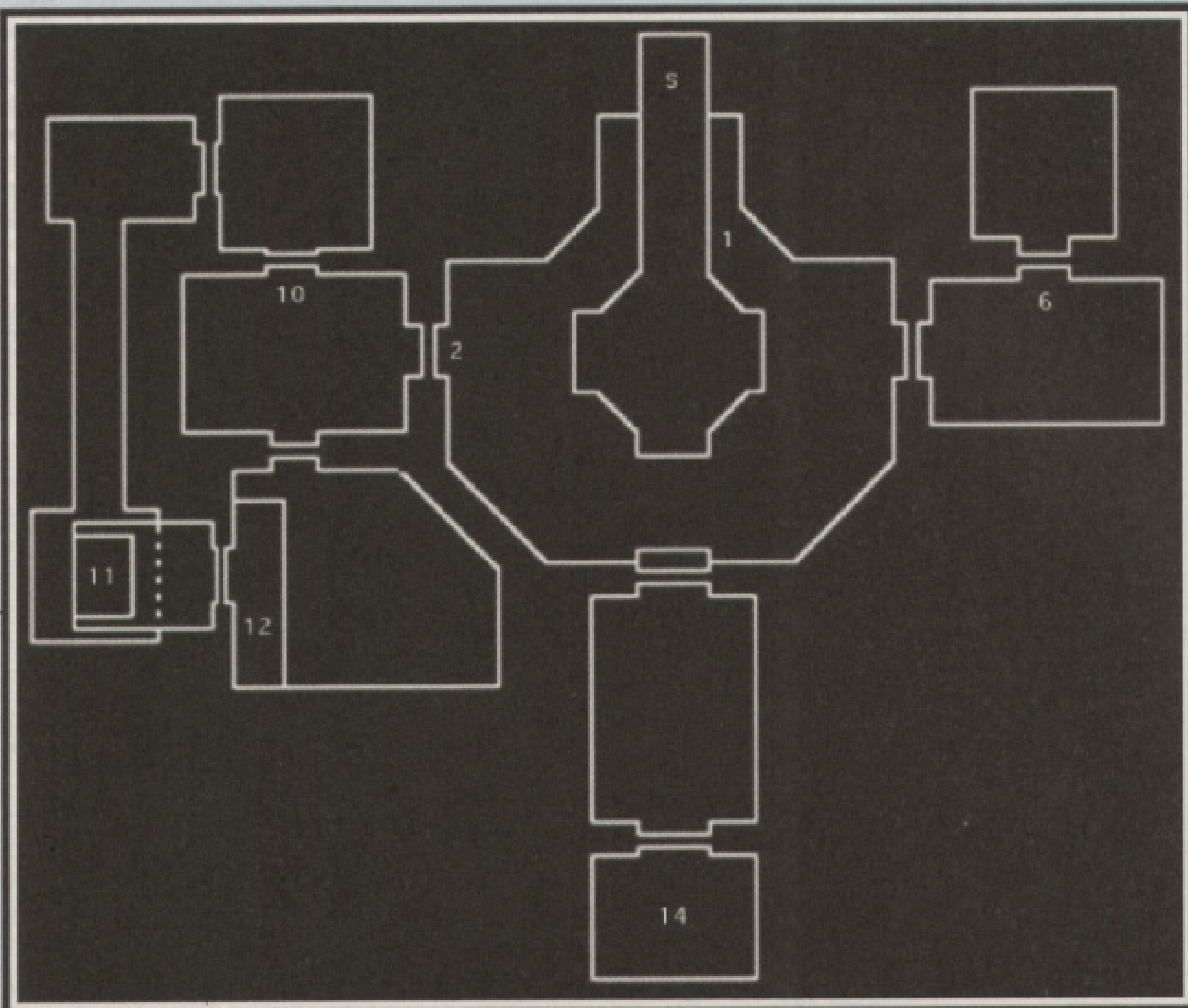


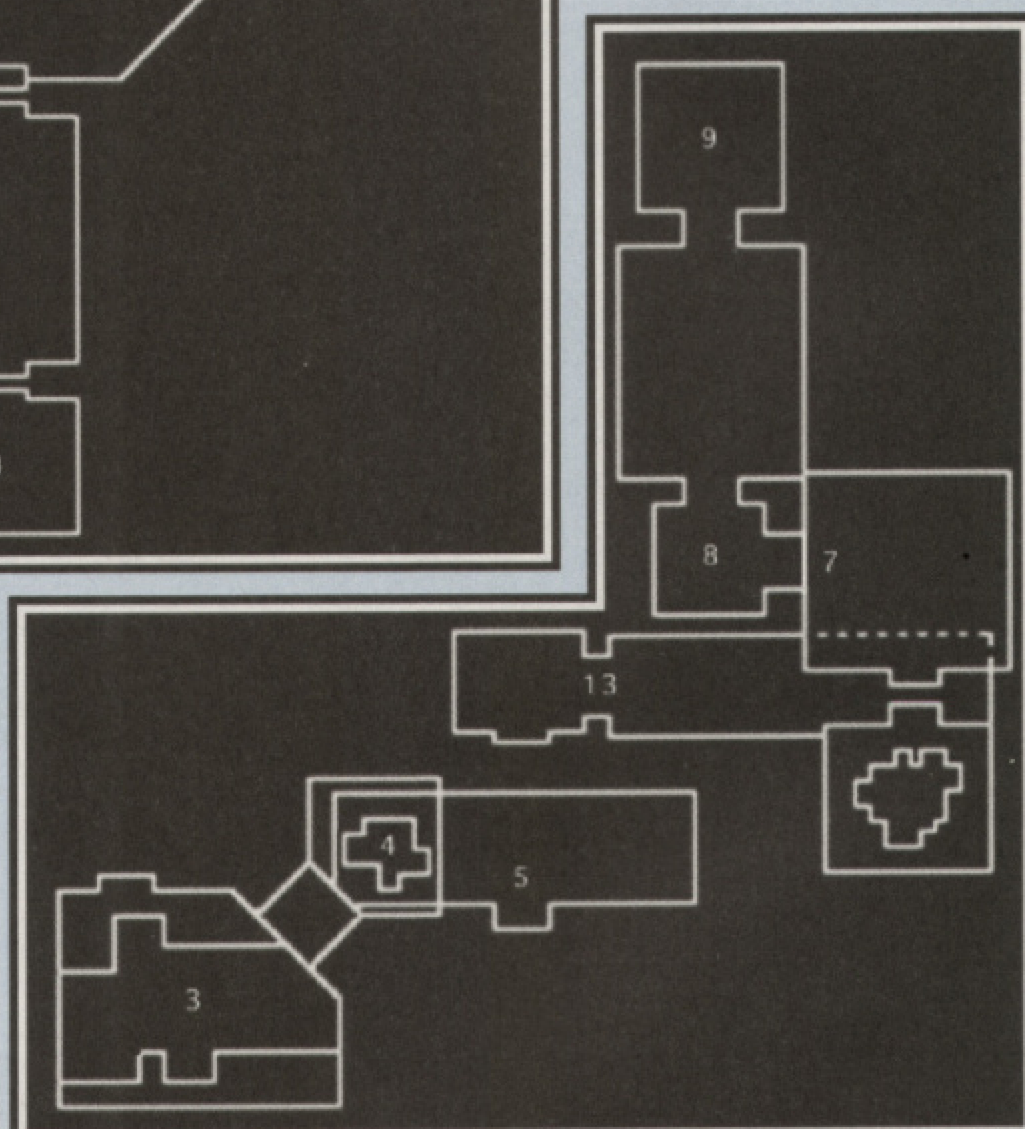
You can cheat to get this symbol. Fnar.

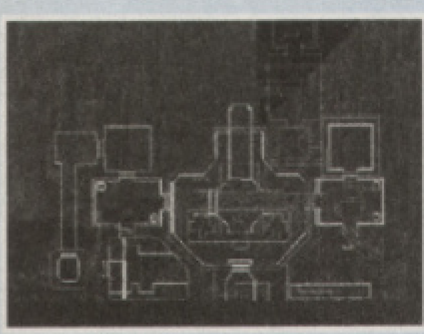
Come back next issue for the last part of the guide!

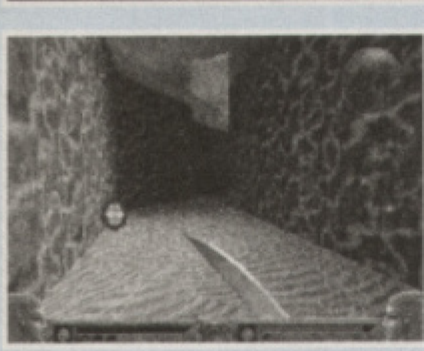
SUNKEN PALACE

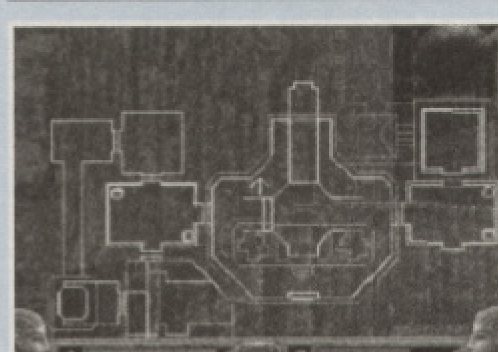
This has proven to be the hardest level yet encountered, due to a combination of lots of deep water and loads of highly annoying Piranhas! Bear in mind that any health pick-ups collected underwater will boost your remaining air time. But don't forget to come to the surface now and again! If all three levels of your health bar are charged up, you'll survive for a couple of minutes longer if your air should run out. Jump into the water at the start and take out the two fish. You'll see three brown stone ball things under the bridge at point one. These could best be described as proximity sensitive mines, and so should always be taken out with bombs or the Cobra Staff. Next go through the underwater door at point two - it will open automatically for you. Inside you'll see more mines, so blow these up carefully. There will be another auto-opening door to your left, so go through it and take out the fish. In the next room you have good opportunity to surface. On the surface you can use normal weapons, so if you select the pistol or M60 and look down, you can shoot out the mines below without wasting precious bomb ammo. Once this is done, swim down to arrive at point four on the second map. Go through to point four, taking out the mines first, and swim upwards. In the room at point five there are more bombs, and the Time Symbol. Go back the way you came, then open the Time door at point six. Move back a little bit, then throw a bomb into this newly opened room. It will catch some of the mines and blow a hole in the floor. Go down through this hole, and then look for a discoloured patch on one wall. This can also be blown through. Swim through this new hole to point eight, and surface. Look down again to shoot the mines. Swim down to the bottom of the shaft, and 'bait' the fish by waiting until they are close and then swimming back to the surface. Now you can take them out at your leisure. Next swim to point nine, and then upwards to collect the next Symbol. Return to the first area of the level, then go through the next Symbol door at point ten. Take the door to the left, kill the fish and head for point eleven. Surface here, and climb out of the water. Go through the door ahead to collect the third symbol at point twelve. Now go back through the Time door (point six), and swim down through the hold in the floor. You should see another Symbol door at the bottom, so open it up. There is a hole in the floor of this room, so swim through it, take out the fish and head for the door at point thirteen. The next section contains doors that automatically close, so be on your toes. Swim up to collect the final Symbol, War, then head for one of the two doors ahead before they close. Follow the resulting passage until you reach the room behind the Time door. Return to the first area, open the War Door and go to the camel at point fourteen.













NEXT MONTH

Yes, Exhumed will be back again in issue 53 as we present the final (no really) part of our guide to this mammoth game. Hopefully Ste won't get stuck on a level like the Sunken Palace for three days again like he did this month, and if you're lucky we might even recap on where to find all the weapons and items. Be patient, Servant of Rameses, it's nearly over.

WWS '97 GUIDE

Sega's Worldwide Soccer '97 widdles on any other attempt at a soccer game this year. But if your attempts in Europe are about as successful as John Major's, maybe our observations will help you somewhat.



TEAM TACTICS

Normally you would skip past formation screens in a football game for all the use they are, but players in Worldwide Soccer usually do play in position. What's more you can study your opponent's choice of formation and counter it with one of your own. Their choice is mainly down to the country and stays the same with every game. It's best to adopt a midfield formation early on in the game, to get a feel for the opposing team. Most of Worldwide Soccer is played in midfield anyway. If you score easily, move forward with a third striker and reduced defence. If your goal was more down to luck, or in the second half bolster the midfield and defensive positions. Make sure your star players are playing in the centre field, and that your strikers are on the wing that best suits their leading foot.

COUNTRY TACTICS

You won't really make out the individual team programming until you start to play at 'hard' and 'very hard' levels. At normal level, the team's make such basic strategic errors, you can trounce them every time. Above that level, they play a tighter game.

SOUTH AMERICAN TEAMS

They show the greatest ball skills, with players who can make runs through the midfield and shimmy past defenders. They are less comfortable with a long ball game, played deep into their defence.

SECOND LEAGUERS

The Israel's and Japan's and their ilk play a basic and predictable game. You will be able to rob them of the ball without risking a foul.

LATIN EUROPEAN

Italy and Spain play colourful games with plenty of passing plays and surges forward. They are quite easy to hit on the counterattack, if you're prepared to put men forward.

NORTH EUROPEAN'S

From Germany to the Scandos, these teams all play slow passing games with varying competence. The weaker teams have a tendency to bring too many men forward, exposing the defence.

ENGLAND

Maybe as a result of Shearer's superlative Summer at Euro '96, the England team seem to pull a special tactic of crossing almost level with the post and connecting with a well-timed header.

TACKLING

There are three methods of tackling, and the one of choice depends on the quality of the team you face. For the poorest teams, you can pick up the ball just by standing in their path. Normally, however, you will have to at least play through with the pass button. If you time this when the players touch, you should take the ball from all but players of the best teams. The sliding tackle has a risk of a foul, but not if used within the arc shown here (a).



The tackle should be started well before the player is intercepted, so the tackler is able to get up and carry on with the ball. Later than that and the tackler will take too long to get off the ground. If the tackler is not in a position to possess the ball, tap the R button to select the nearest player.

By the same token, if you are being tackled, pressing the pass button as you meet will play the ball through the tackle and you have a good chance of staying in possession.



THE SHOOTING



CYCLE

When shooting at goal, the player has an animation cycle for which you should hold the button all the way through for optimum power. The problem is, high power also means greater height, and belting the ball from within the box often sends it over the bar. On the other hand, sharp taps send the ball rolling at a pitiful pace. The strongest shots come from those taken while running, or on the volley.

STRIKING RANGES

There are two optimum shooting ranges for successful goals, shown here (b). The long range shot often works because a high-degree of aftertouch (ie. banana shots) is possible and the goalie doesn't become alert until you come within a certain range. The close range shot comes into play if the player gets within the penalty box. The best approach to the goalkeeper is actually head-on. Time the kick from a few yards as he will predictably bend for the ball allowing you to chip it over his shoulder. Attempts from the edge of the box are rarely successful except for rebounds, as the effect of aftertouch is limited and the goalkeeper follows your movements.

MAN MARKING

The solid presence of players and the closeness they mirror their opposite number can be turned to your advantage. Although obstruction is a fouling offence in the goal area, WWS doesn't recognise this, so a body in the way is a last ditch chance to prevent a goal. Also, by shadowing a player up the wing, you can force him in to a wide position from which he has little chance of scoring.

INTERCEPTIONS

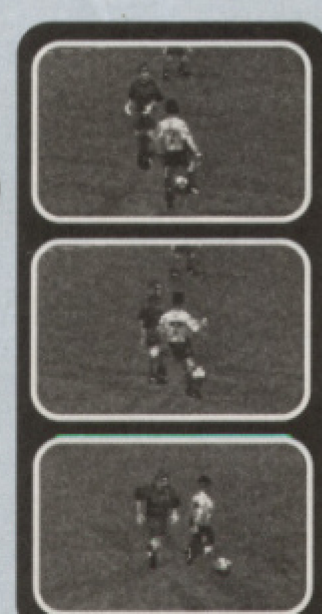
When the ball is in the air, press the top left shift button, then C a second or so before it intercepts to play one of several clever mid-air interceptions. Heading is the most common of these, and you should really aim to intercept 40-50% of the goalkicks that come your way. It's probably a good idea if you fiddle around with the formations for the better success rate. The chest and volley moves are selected if the ball is in the correct position. This should easily improve your interceptions.

STAMINA

Your player's generally have high stamina levels, so you can use the speed burst button a lot. One of the best uses is just as you come to pass a defender, press a diagonal and speed to evade him.

COACHING

Effective use of the coaching option really comes with practice, but it's useful for set-pieces like goal kicks, square crosses when you're level with the box, and corners. It pulls most of your midfield into potential scoring positions. The most effective move with this is the chip button (C), by crossing the ball back into the centre. top right to select the closest player, then C for a header or volley. As long as you're not almost level with the goal, this creates confusion in the opposition defence and a gap for your forwards.



If you don't already own WWS '97, buy it. If you can't afford it, steal it. Only joking, kids.

SHIMMYING

Use of the advanced shimmy technique comes in very handy. It can be used to wrongfoot opponents, or change direction with the ball quickly. In the goal area, a shimmy will misdirect even the more intelligent goalkeeper.

LONGBALL

A rather unsubtle (rather British) mode of play, which makes good use of the chip button. Making long chips from a position just inside your half will often connect with your forwards who can find a gap in the defence — generally, computer opponents push too many men forward. The best results come from playing the long ball up the wing, rather than into the centre of the field. Use aftertouch by moving the Joypad as you kick, to bend the ball.



Enger-land, Enger-land, Enger-land!!

DIRECTORY

This is The Directory. It's what we reckon are the Top 50 games available for your console, all worthy of your cash. These are not the only decent titles for the Saturn, but staying on this chart has an element of prestige.

The Directory evolves as new releases force the lower echelons off the end and into gaming obscurity. Come back each month to see the effect of improving software. There will, of course, always be a place for classic games — titles like Sega Rally, Tomb Raider and NiGHTS will remain on the Directory for years to come.

You may notice changes in the ratings from back issues, and indeed the directory ratings may change. We make no apology for this — games are rated relatively, and no reviewer can quite tell after a week or so how a game will age. We've assessed all the directory titles as harshly and as realistically as we can. Sometimes we've made mistakes — we're human — and the directory is the place to rectify them. It's also a court of appeal for the underrated.

1 Virtua Fighter 2



AM2's arcade classic. The sine qua non of 3D fighting games.

Reviewed:	MM37
Tipped :	MM41/42

96

2 NiGHTS



A breathtakingly original piece of action gaming from Sonic Team.

Reviewed:	MM48
Tipped:	MM49/50

96

3 Sega Rally



An exquisite driving game and an awesome AM3 conversion.

Reviewed:	MM38
Tipped:	MM42/43

95

4 Fighting Vipers



AM2's no-holds barred saucy brawl-'em-up.

Reviewed:	MM49
Tipped:	MM50

95

5 Tomb Raider



Forget FMV, this is what 'interactive movies' should be like.

Reviewed:	MM50
Tipped:	MM51

94

6 Virtua Cop 2



It's pretty much arcade perfect. That's all the encouragement you need to buy it.

Reviewed:	MM51
Tipped:	MM52

NEW ENTRY!

94

7 Exhumed



3D Egyptian Doom-fest of exceptionally rich game design.

Reviewed:	MM47
Tipped:	MM51/51

94

8 Street Fighter Alpha 2



Capcom's unparalleled and uncompromised arcade smash.

Reviewed:	MM50
Tipped:	MM50

93

9 Daytona USA CCE



Remixed and extended. Everything the original never was.

Reviewed:	MM49
Tipped:	MM50

NEW ENTRY!

93

10 Worldwide Soccer '97



Soccer in its most realistic and detailed form.

Reviewed:	MM49
Tipped:	MM50

93

11 Virtual On

Quirky robot combat that won't appeal to everyone, but it's a corker nonetheless.



Reviewed:	MM51
Tipped:	MM51

NEW ENTRY!

92

12 Actua Golf

Everything a golf gamer would want it to be.



Reviewed:	MM49
Tipped:	N/A

92

13 Bust-a-Move 2

Incurably infectious simple puzzle gameplay for two.



Reviewed:	MM49
Tipped:	MM50

92

14 Night Warriors

Stunningly sharp 2D beat-'em-up from Capcom.



Reviewed:	MM44
Tipped:	MM45

92

15 Olympic Soccer

Speed and action successfully emphasised.



Reviewed:	MM47
Tipped:	N/A

91

16 Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3

Comprehensive conversion that should please MK fanatics.



Reviewed:	MM44
Tipped:	MM48

91

17 Magic Carpet

Epic magical adventure, ingeniously assembled.



Reviewed:	MM40
Tipped:	MM51

91

18 Thunderhawk 2

Stunning war action, excellent 3D graphics.



Reviewed:	MM37
Tipped:	MM39

91

19 Virtua Fighter Kids

Why? Don't ask, just play.



Reviewed:	MM48
Tipped:	MM48

91

20 Madden NFL '97

After a few years in the wilderness, Madden is back and bigger than ever



Reviewed:	MM51
Tipped:	MM51

NEW ENTRY!

91

Virtua Cop 2 and Daytona crash straight into the top ten!

21 Command & Conquer
The quintessential wargame finally gets a Saturn release. And damned fine it is too.



Reviewed: MM51 | Tipped: N/A | NEW ENTRY! | **90**

22 Virtua Cop
Target-shooting gangster game with textbook playability.



Reviewed: MM37 | Tipped: MM42 | **90**

23 Shining Wisdom
Graphics not important. Excellent story RPG.



Reviewed: MM40 | Tipped: MM45/46 | **90**

24 Panzer Dragoon Zwei
Awesome, but short, shoot-'em-up 'ride'.



Reviewed: MM43 | Tipped: MM44 | **90**

25 BUG!
One of few worthy Saturn platformers.



Reviewed: MM35 | Tipped: N/A | **90**

26 Guardian Heroes
Quirky scrolling beat-'em-up. Treasure's legendary intensity.



Reviewed: MM40 | Tipped: MM41 | **90**

27 Loaded
Relentless, sadistic plan-view shooter. Go berserk!



Reviewed: MM44 | Tipped: MM45/47 | **90**

28 Alien Trilogy
The atmosphere papers over the weaknesses.



Reviewed: MM48 | Tipped: MM51 | **90**

29 Street Fighter Alpha
Overshadowed by it's big brother, but still up there with the greats.



Reviewed: MM50 | Tipped: N/A | **89**

30 X-Men: COTA
Classic 2D combat game let down slightly by PAL format.



Reviewed: MM39 | Tipped: MM40 | **89**

31 Story of Thor 2
Precious gameplay hidden in the depths of this RPG.



Reviewed: MM47 | Tipped: MM49/50 | **89**

32 Blam! Machinehead
Beefy blaster product of warped minds.



Reviewed: MM49 | Tipped: N/A | **88**

33 A.M.O.K
3D shoot-'em-up with Desert Strike's mission structure.



Reviewed: MM50 | Tipped: N/A | **88**

34 Need for Speed
Reckless road racing with a highly developed sense of speed.



Reviewed: MM45 | Tipped: MM51 | **88**

35 Wipeout
Excellent concept racer on futuristic speeders.



Reviewed: MM43 | Tipped: MM44 | **88**

36 Athlete Kings
Hi-res multi-sports action. Generally acclaimed.



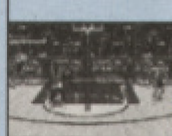
Reviewed: MM47 | Tipped: MM49 | **88**

37 Euro '96
Official football festival with plenty of supporters.



Reviewed: MM45 | Tipped: MM46 | **88**

38 NBA Action
Sega's underrated, but well made basketball sim.



Reviewed: MM50 | Tipped: MM48 | **88**

39 Street Racer
The closest you'll get to Mario Kart on a Saturn



Reviewed: MM50 | Tipped: N/A | **87**

40 Mystaria
Shining Force-style adventure in scale and gameplay.



Reviewed: MM40 | Tipped: N/A | **87**

41 Gungriffon
Tactical Mech War in a heavy duty shooter.



Reviewed: MM45 | Tipped: MM46 | **87**

42 NHL Powerplay Hockey '96
Fantastically slick adaptation of the sport to console.



Reviewed: MM46 | Tipped: N/A | **87**

43 Baku Baku Animal
The coolest, maddest Tetris puzzler ever.



Reviewed: MM40 | Tipped: N/A | **87**

44 Space Hulk
Spooky monster strategy/action game.



Reviewed: MM47 | Tipped: N/A | **86**

45 Worms
Ugly, amusing team strategy game with its hardcore fans.



Reviewed: MM39 | Tipped: MM49 | **86**

46 The Horde
Nothing quite like this mad mock-medieval game of tactics.



Reviewed: MM41 | Tipped: N/A | **85**

47 Sim City 2000
The classic city-builder game, but a tad slow.



Reviewed: MM37 | Tipped: MM46 | **85**

48 Sega Ages
Three classic arcade games on one disc. Buy it for Outrun.



Reviewed: MM51 | Tipped: N/A | NEW ENTRY! | **84**

49 Valora Valley Golf
Golf given an edge by being set in Hell.



Reviewed: MM46 | Tipped: N/A | **84**

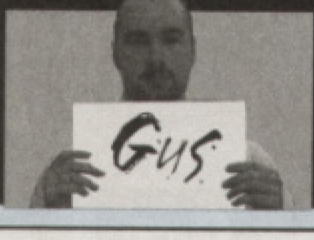
50 NBA Jam TE
A faultless rendition of the old arcade game.

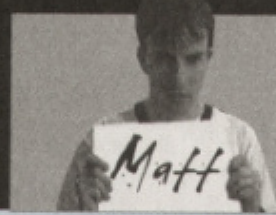


Reviewed: MM38 | Tipped: MM39 | **84**

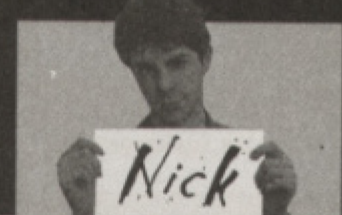
MEAN MAIL

Saturn Vs PSX, expensive arcade technology, footie and Saturn Vs PSX. Notice a pattern emerging here? Write to us about something different, please. MINCEMEAT MAIL, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU or e-mail us at stevo@otaku.com.









WHY CAN'T WE ALL JUST BE FRIENDS?

Dear Mean Mail,

"I hate the Saturn", "I hate the PlayStation". Oh, please give me a break – the two biggest selling consoles of all time and all we can do is slag them off. Now, I own a PlayStation and a Saturn (you see I saved over the years but enough about that) but it seems that nowadays we can't be happy with what we've got. It's always Virtua Fighter 2 is better than Tekken 2 and vice versa. Well what a lot of bull*!%?. Quite personally I prefer Last Bronx to either of the two above. I already own Tekken 2 and VF2 and they are both extraordinary games for each console. What I'm trying to say to all the readers is "Don't be biased, be happy with what you've got". Plus I would like to hear your opinions on my comments. Thank you very much plus I loved the new look and the CD, keep up the good work.
Yours,

Steven 'No Punctuation' Brown, Glasgow

MATT: How far are we going to get into the issue before Nick lowers the tone?
STE: Biggest selling consoles? I don't think so!
GUS: But over time, Ste, I think they both will sell more than the Megadrive and SNES.
STE: I agree with his sentiments, I have both machines and they're both great.
GUS: I think inter-machine rivalry is good fun as long as people don't start believing all the hype.
NICK: I went to the Sony party and all the birds were quite friendly to me.
STE: Matt didn't go — that's loyalty.
GUS: When it comes to conversions we try to be unbiased — Destruction Derby, for example is a crud Saturn game. Then again, it's not such a good PSX one.

I WANT A MODEL 2 BOARD IN MY ROOM!

Dear Mean Mail,

I have had a Saturn now for just over a year and I am a bit disappointed at both the Saturn and the games for it. First of all the Saturn: I bought it for one game and one game only, Daytona USA. I loved the game in the arcades and hoped that one day I could play the game in the comfort of my own bedroom without paying £1 a go. Then Sega released the Saturn and a few games a couple of months later, and the first thing I did was buy the Saturn plus VF and my favourite game, Daytona USA. Virtua Fighter was near arcade perfect and Daytona was okay until I loaded the game up and heard the awful music of the intro. Why didn't Sega use the exact music from the arcade and why didn't they produce an exact arcade perfect conversion? I found out that Sega had rushed their conversions, but that isn't an excuse. I also found out that the Saturn is less powerful than their arcade boards which explained the poor conversions. What I want to know is why Sega didn't release a machine that could handle their arcade machines because after all, all myself and others were wanting were arcade machines in our own home. So couldn't Sega have just have released a machine that contained their arcade board(s)? Second of all, I like the Saturn and most of it's games, but the games are just crappy conversions of PlayStation games. Two games I have got are FIFA '96 and Need for Speed from EA. They were both released on PlayStation first and looked good in graphical terms when I saw them running on my friend's PlayStation but when I bought them for my Saturn I noticed that FIFA's players didn't have numbers on their shirts and the graphics were more pixelated and in Need for Speed the FMV intro looked more blurry than it did on the PlayStation which leads me to believe that EA make their games on PlayStation first and then they convert the games from PlayStation to Saturn which makes the games look second best. So what I really want answered is 1) Why Sega released a games machine that is less powerful than their arcade boards? And 2) Why do we get PlayStation conversions all the time?
Yours,

William English, Aberdeenshire
NICK: I had a 'model' in my bedroom 'too' but she wasn't 'bored'. Geddit.
RICH: (Calls over from Saturn Mag):The model 2 board is approx. 40 times as expensive as a Saturn.
GUS: I think you're being unrealistic, William. For the price, the Saturn offers amazing conversions. If you want the real Daytona, you're going to have to spend several grand.
STE: The Saturn is the same as the ST-V board.
MATT: And there are ST-V games still being made. Arcade games are always going to be a step ahead.
GUS: I think it's sad that you're disappointed with the likes of Fighting Vipers and Cop 2. By the way, Need for Speed PLAYS much better on Saturn.
STE: EA have lost it anyway.

GRR! I'M AN ANGRY BOY

Dear Mean Mail,

I am writing to you with sheer disgust. As the Summer holidays approached, me and my brother looked for a good Saturn game to spend our hard

MEAN ART

X-cellent! Gary Zammit drew two amazing pictures this month...



...and both the X-Men and Mortal Kombat ninjas look superb!



Thanks to Joseph Spademan for his cool picture of Evil the Cat. Meow!



BEST LETTER

OKAY, I ADMIT IT, THE SATURN'S GREAT!

Dear Mean Mail,

I am writing to congratulate you on the CD demo issue. At £2.75 it's brilliant - please continue doing this at this price. Currently I do not own a Saturn, but hopefully that will change very soon as I'm selling my PlayStation in order to buy a Saturn. I have had a Saturn before when they first came out, and the reason why I'm going back to it is because of the quality of the games. The Saturn has AM2, what top quality arcade team does the PlayStation have? Sega has games like VF2, Rally, VC 1 & 2, Fighting Vipers, NiGHTS, Worldwide Soccer, etc. All are excellent games, some with more additions than the arcade versions. That's what I call support for a machine. With my PlayStation, I have both Wipeouts, Tekken 2 and Space Hulk and when I compare Tekken 2 to VF2 it's got to be VF2. Please print this letter because I for one am sick of PlayStation owners slagging off Saturn owners. It might be true that Sega sells more machines than Sega, but most of Sony's have faults and their owners get reconditioned machines in return. And who wants a copy of F1 which is bugged when you can have Rally which is excellent. Keep up the excellent work!
Yours,

Stephen Sigley

NICK: I've had the experience of going to my mates' houses playing F1 and Tekken 2 all night, then them coming round to mine and playing Sega Rally and Virtua Cop 2. For some reason the you can't compare the atmosphere of the Sega evenings with the Sony ones. The Sega games are more sociable.
GUS: A lot of people felt let down with the initial Saturn games — even Sega recognise that, but the amount of quality releases coming now means that 's history. And arcade games are generally better on Saturn.

earned cash on. We turned to MEAN MACHINES for advice and saw that you highly rated the new Actua Soccer game, Euro '96. We bought it, and after what must about half an hour we wished we hadn't. How could you give it over 90%?! The gameplay is crap – shoot (if you could call it that) and pass! The options – practice or Euro! (wow!!) crowd – crap! graphics – crap! plus the game is so easy my mam would complete it first time like we did. How could you say it's the best "footie game" yet because it is not and me and my brother bought it on your review – what a mistake that was! Were you bribed or insane to rate the game so highly? I have every issue of your mag and I know that it is not usually so low quality as this issue. I now look forward to a review of FIFA '97 so I can flog Euro '96 and buy that.
Yours,

Richard Stevens, Nuneaton.

PS. I bet you don't have the guts to print this!

STE: Who reviewed it?
GUS: ER... Marcus and Claire. No, that's a cop-out. I admit that we got it a bit wrong with Euro '96.
STE: We recommend Worldwide Soccer above any other football game.
MATT: Here are my buying tips: Dragonheart, Revolution X — anything by Acclaim or THQ.
(in the background Phil loses Steve's game of Exhumed)



ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

Dear Mean Mail,

I've just bought MEAN MACHINES and I think it's brill. But I'm not writing to say how good I think it is, I'm writing to say I have a mega problem. I hate my Megadrive now and I don't know what I want for Christmas, a Saturn or a PlayStation. All my friends are saying get a PSX, but I'm a Sega fan. So please, please send me the good/bad news for the two consoles, and your own opinions.
Yours,

Jay 'I'm not a computer nerd' Dodah, Purley.

STE: I never got anything above £30 for my Christmas.
MATT: The Saturn has fantastic arcade games.
NICK: Here are the good points; Die Hard Arcade, Sega Touring Cars, Dead or Alive, Last Bronx, SuperCar, Sonic Fighters, Virtua Fighter 3, Wave Runner, X-Men Vs Street Fighter...
GUS: We get the point.
JASON: And Candy from 'Vipers. That's my good point.
PHIL: I like the horse from Daytona!
NICK: So?
MATT: Yeah, there should be more animals in video games. I like skunks me.
GUS: Hmm... I wonder why?
NICK: Hold on a minute! I thought I had the monopoly on bad personal hygiene around here? Hey, did I tell you about the time that I forgot to wash my hair for a good six months? Lads? Lads...
(Cue sounds of MEAN MACHINES team shuffling ten feet away from our talented but scruffy designer).

SANDRA BOLLOCKS HERE

If it isn't one thing it's another, and due to severe ineptitude on my part, I managed to mishear Steve's e-mail address last month. So in actual fact, what you want to be doing is mailing us on stevo@otaku.com (no capital letters or any of that jazz). Steve typed it in himself this month, so it'd had better be right or there'll be trouble. Anyway, we're moving offices soon (AND BOY, WE CAN'T WAIT!) so the address will probably change again. Flippin' typical.



100% PURE DRIVEL FROM OUR MORE GIFTED READERS...

The bird droppings on your column are more attractive than you.

Martin Conway, Papworth Everard

YOB: The bird droppings say "Thank you very much Martin. Martin in that little village with a silly name we've never even heard of and probably isn't very important in the general scheme of things." Cheeky little guano, ain't they?

Oi Yob, yes you, stop slobbering over my great gran and read this. I like Sega and this mag is great and so are you but I feel like taking the mickey out of someone so who better than an ugly twat who trys to be hard and fancies himself. I bet you fancy grannies and if I had my way I'd get my gran to give you a slap! Yes a slap! By the way you're not hard and everyone knows that in your picture when you're slobbering to try and look hard you're actually slobbering over the granny taking the picture. (who by the way could cane you). Bye Yob (you twat!!)

From U.R.Crap
P.S If you take the mickey out of my name my next letter will have a bomb in it you *$?!# git, alright!?!

YOB: This letter is so fantastic I just had to include all of it. I think Mr. Whiffy here has something of an unhealthy granny fixation and would benefit from immediate medical attention. Preferably from a doctor with a shotgun. I would take the mickey out of your name, but since you appear to have forgotten to include your real one, I can't. Sorry about that, you pathetic waste of space.

You stink of dog crap and you are a puffy git so answer these questions before I come round and knock your....

Jeff Hey, Yorkshire.

YOB: The crap you can smell is more likely to be the pungent aroma of your breath and, in case you hadn't noticed for the past six years or so, questions get answered in Q+A, so hoppit you horrible little man!

Q&A

"C'mon ladies and gentleman. Roll up, roll up and ask the MEAN MACHINES Editor, the luverly Gus, a tricky question or two. No problem is too big, no answer is too informative. If you wanna know what Mark Maslowicz eats for breakfast or whether Nick changes his underpants more than once a month then the mighty one is the man to write to. Send all letters to: Q & A, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

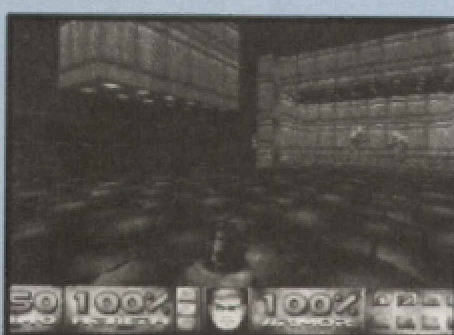
RANDOM LIGHT, PLEASE WEAVE YOUR PATTERN,

Dear Gus,

I am a new Saturn owner, and I have a few questions. Please answer them or you'll break my little heart.
1. I missed the review of Alien Trilogy, but what makes it a 15 certificate? Apart from the carcasses and acid on your demo CD, is it very gory?
2. I have Sega Rally, BUG! and Clockwork Knight. I will soon be getting NiGHTS too. Which do you think are the best out of Tomb Raider, Keio 2, Wipeout and Sim City 2000? Or should I wait for BUG TOO! and ID4?
3. The cover CD on issue 50 was brilliant! When will you bring out the next one, will the mag price go up, and will there be a set time for each CD? (eg. every five mags)
4. Oh yes, and what happened to the Wild 9s review in issue 50?
Yours faithfully,

Michael Gillingham, Beaminster.

GUS:1. Killing people (even if they are infected Space Marines) generally doesn't go down well with the BBFC (the censors) who recommend a rating. I'm sure Acclaim thinks the 15 rating gives the game a cachet too. 2. Tomb Raider, without a doubt. 3. There is no set date for another demo, but we are pressing Sega hard for more of them. At the moment, these discs are controlled and made in Japan, creating some difficulties, but it is our goal to have more of them in 1997. 4. It wasn't a review — Wild 9s is not expected until Spring 1997. We decided to wait and get more details from Shiny, and as a matter of fact, I e-mailed Dave Perry just last week...



Doom may be a classic game but how will it rate against the likes of Exhumed and Alien Trilogy?

Dear Gus,

I will soon be getting a Saturn, but I need some advice on what accessories and games to get for it.
1. The arcade racer will come with the Saturn that I'm getting, what games can you recommend for its use?
2. Can you buy a memory card for the system? If so, how much would it cost and what does it actually do?
3. Is there a version of Doom for the Saturn?
4. Which is better, Alien Trilogy or Doom?
5. Should I bother with VF2 for the Megadrive as I will have it for the Saturn?
6. Finally, my friend thinks that PlayStations are better than Saturns, but I told him he was talking crap. Was my friend right?
Thanks for your time,

Erik Smith, Cumbernauld.

GUS:1. Daytona USA CCE, Sega Rally. 2. Good news — you get free memory with a Saturn (unlike the PSX where you must buy cards). Your Saturn has a battery-powered back-up with enough units for about 6-7 games. You can buy cartridges for £15-20 that will save many more than this. The cartridge saves positions, scores and secret modes and 80%+ of games use some sort of memory function. 3. There will be when this mag is out. 4. Alien Trilogy. 5. Absolutely not. 6. No. He will probably give you lots of examples but just say : Virtua Cop 2, NiGHTS, Quake, Virtua Fighter 3.

Dear Gus,

Please answer these questions:
1.Congratulations on the new look mag, it's a big improvement over your old look. But why did you get rid of the Effects and Animation ratings in your reviews? That extra level of detail added to the quality of the reviews and made them more informative.
2. I know you really hate these questions, but could you rate these games best to worst, Actua Golf, NiGHTS, Discworld, Tomb Raider, NHL Powerplay?
3. Should I part exchange FIFA '96 for the best game in question 2?
4. The demo disc on issue 50 was great, but is there any chance of a playable Tomb Raider demo?
5. Is Ultimate Doom on the PlayStation as good as Exhumed and Alien Trilogy?
6. What is your favourite Saturn game of all time?

Edward Hetherington, Sunderland.

GUS:1. The removal of these two ratings was a personal decision. I felt that more detailed information in the remaining boxes was a better use of space, and you'll notice these comments are longer. When people enjoy games they tend to regard the visual and aural aspect of the game as a whole, not in terms of static and moving graphics. That's my opinion — we're out to give a view, not a set of statistics. 2. I do hate them — how can you compare golf with hockey? But... NiGHTS, Tomb Raider, Actua Golf, Powerplay Hockey, Discworld. 3. Better, exchange it for Worldwide Soccer '97. 4. Not from us, but there is one on the next Saturn Mag. 5. It is not. 6. NiGHTS.

AND TELL US WHAT GAMES ARE GOOD ON SATURN.

Dear Gus,

I have been reading your mag for ages and have never had anything printed in it, so could you please answer my questions, thanks!
1. When will Ultimate Mortal Kombat be out on the Megadrive?
2. Do you actually review Megadrive games anymore?
3. When will Sonic Fighters be out on the Saturn?
4. When it does come out what new options will it have, and will it have any secret characters?
5. Will Killer Instinct come out on the Saturn
6. Is Guardian Heroes any good?
Thanks mate,



The new comfy Jap Saturn pad. The UK one is black.

:Scott Cormack, Buckie, Scotland.

GUS:1. Should be now. 2. If we get them yes. There has never been an issue without one. 3. Some time '97. 4. I don't know. 5. Never. Thank God it's such a SAD game. 6. It's okay, but I think people went overboard.

VIC AND BOB? SHOOTING STARS? PAH!

Dear Gus,

Please answer these questions,
1. Are there any plans to bring out Warcraft 2 for the Saturn?
2. Will there be any Star Trek or Star Wars games for the Saturn?
3. Is Starfighter 3000 any good, as I have it for my Archimedes but I would like it for the Saturn?
4. Is Warhammer out for the Saturn?
5. I recently bought a Saturn and the control pad is different to my friend's, who bought his in April. Was there something wrong with the first one or did Sega just change the design?

R. Muschamp, Leeds

@MEANNAME:GUS:1. There were mumblings about it, but they came to nothing. 2. Amazingly, none are being talked about, but I think it's inevitable that some will. 3. Okay. 4. No. 5. Sega changed the design. The original Euro Saturn pad was chunkier than the Japanese as we apparently have bigger hands, but it was a bit horrendous. Sega sensibly restyled the pads along the Japanese lines.

Dear Gus,

Please answer these questions or I'll kick the s**t out of you,
1. I've had a Saturn for a year and I want to get SWS '97 and I want to know whether it's a FIFA type?
2. When is the Saturn keyboard going to be released?
3. When is the Saturn Internet released?
4. When is Manx TT released?
5. My brother and his friends are all getting a N64 and they are all teasing me saying Nintendo are going to kick Sega's ass so can you give me something better about the Saturn to shut them up with?

Marcus Stuckey, Bristol

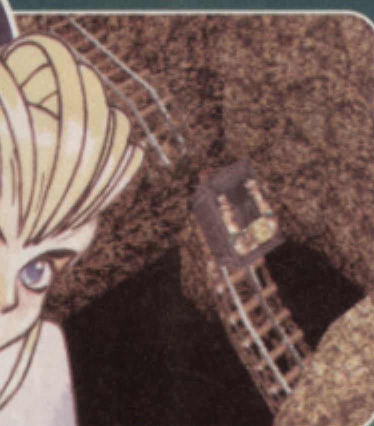
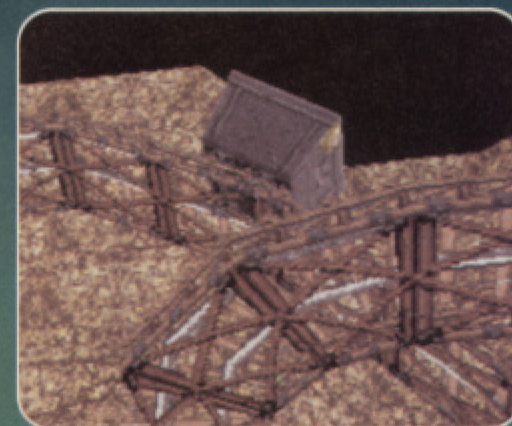
GUS:1. Fans of FIFA will enjoy Worldwide Soccer, as it's the same but better. 2. The Netlink has no firm release date, but the keyboard follows shortly. 3. See 2. 4. I've been told March, but I've seen nothing. 5. Ask them what decent games apart from Mario Kart they intend to buy. I've played Wave Race and Pilotwings and they get boring very quickly.

SEWERS

The fetid area under the island is the testing ground for platform skill. The simplest areas involve copious crate-jumping, the more complex propel Garian through sluice gates above jobbies bobbing in the current .





MINING AREA

Slave labour works the rich seams of Bilanium here using mine mechanisms that lead down to lava lakes below the island.






THE PRINCIPLE OF PARALLEL PLOT

Dark Saviour's much-vaunted Parallel Plot Scenario is actually a unique feature of video games, as far as we are aware. There are five separate story paths, or parallels, that depend on actions that Garian takes within the game. The simplest of these is the first parallel, which most players will complete without much difficulty. In the succeeding parallels, the player visits many of the same areas but different events occur. Also, later parallels open up new areas, like the excellent minecart sequence shown here, which are more challenging. The amount of energy given to complete the task is reduced, and the skill of your battle opponents increases with later parallels.




KURTLIEGEN'S MANSION

Only encountered in Parallel 2, the sumptuous surroundings temporarily phase Garian, who then has to contend with the laser security measures to retrieve the Diary of Wouda.





LAVIAN RUINS

These catacombs combine puzzles with murals that tell the story of the decline and rescue of ancient Lavia, who faced a threat from Bilan hundreds of years ago. The key may be lost with Garian beneath the shifting sands.



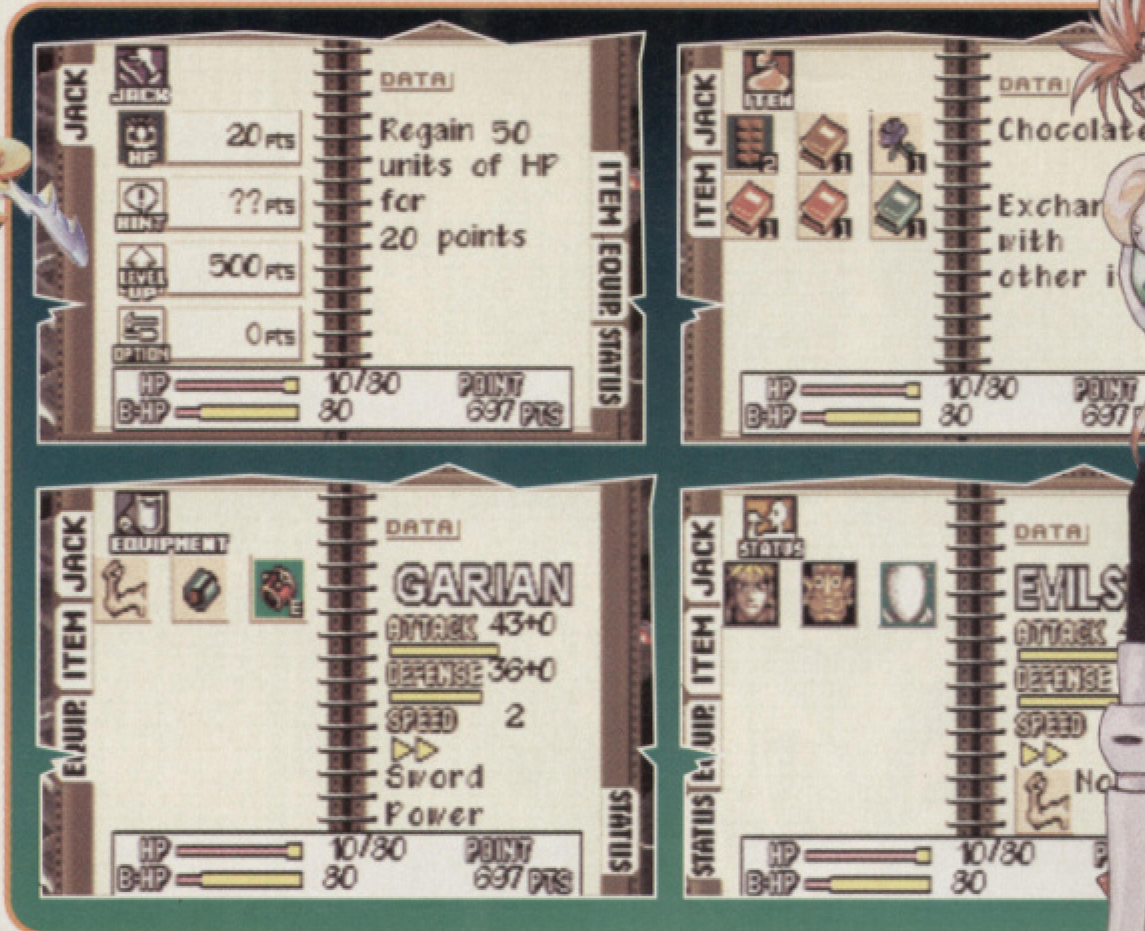


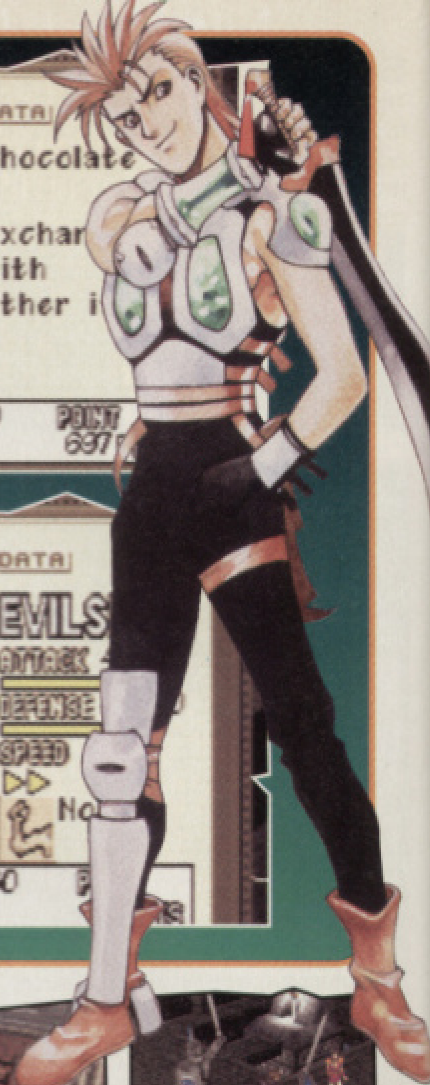

The 'terrifying' Bilan just looks like a big bogey to us.

DARK SAVIOR

GARIAN'S DIARY

The menus for objects and status are kept pretty simple. Garian has a diary that reveals his level, equipment status and inventory. There are no great piles of objects to discover in Dark Saviour. Mostly, the correct key or an informative book is your short-term goal.





scores

GRAPHICS Dark Saviour looks strange. Both 16 bit and 32 bit with its detailed sprite characters and complex backgrounds. The best panoramas are stunning, and there's an overwhelming variety. **87**

SOUND All the music is generated by the Saturn chip and within that there's a mix of dramatic overture and shameless pop. The sound effects vary in quality, but the overall effect is strong. **82**

PLAYABILITY Climax games have a wonderful character all their own, and Dark Saviour is riveting. But we have reservations about the battle system and general easiness. **92**

LASTABILITY The Parallel Plot system is rather mind-bending, and finishing the first part may make the game seem too short, but Dark Saviour has novel ways of lengthening its shelf life. **88**

overall

Clearly the most lavish RPG on Saturn, with nothing to put off platform gamesplayers too. There's never a dull moment. **90**

POLY MAX

Climax's custom-designed Hyperion Perspective is behind the isometric graphics engine of Dark Saviour. They claim this direct-to-machine programming method allows hundreds of thousands of polygon tiles to be displayed at once, and permits the player to zoom in and out whilst retaining detail. There is also a limited leeway to rotate the screen, which is handy when Garian moves behind objects as you can manipulate the camera to find him. There is a small amount of glitching when a very wide perspective is taken in complex screens, and similarly some unavoidable slowdown.





comment



GUS

I've been anticipating Dark Saviour for a year now, and it lives up to most expectations. There's clearly a core of Saturn owners who want games with plots, characters and inventive locations – exactly the kind of experience served up by Climax. The Saturn is used dramatically to create impressive interiors and menacing monsters. The script is often bizarre and hilarious, as well as shrewd. Made for the Japanese market, it's a bit too easy in places for European tastes, negating all the work that has gone into those scenes, but the Parallel Plot system, which gives the game immense replay value, is quite inspired. I'm not totally convinced by the battle system, which replaces skirmishes with lots of little monsters during the platform mode, with set-piece encounters with characters – it makes lots of areas seem empty and lifeless. But this alone wouldn't stop me from getting the excellent Dark Saviour.

comment



STEVE

One thing Dark Saviour isn't short on is long-term playability and pure addictiveness and writing this I'm just itching to get back to it! Possibly the best thing is that it's different. It's refreshing to see a game that deals with some 'grown up' issues like ethics, albeit in a steam-punk/fantasy type setting. The five different plots, or parallels, see you returning to altered locations each time you play the game which adds a huge slice of longevity. Climax has also created a game that looks distinctive. The roving 'Hyperion perspective' is also handy because it means you can see objects and level layout that would otherwise be hidden in a regular isometric view. Hopefully the success of Dark Saviour will spur an even greater release of Japanese RPG's in this country and convince Saturn owners that Sega is definitely committed to producing quality titles.







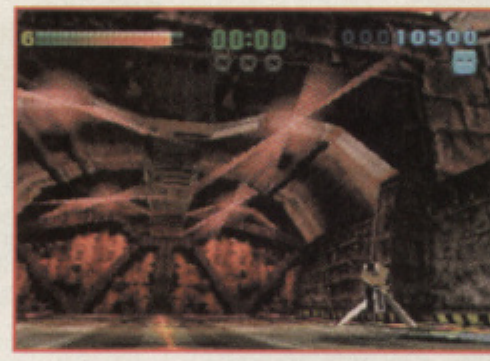
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review

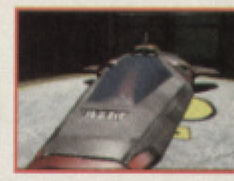
Game Name	Tunnel B1
Publisher	Ocean
Release	December Price £44.99
Game Style	Shoot-'em-up
Import?	✗ Linkplay? ✗ Players 1
Control	Joypad
Background	A conversion of the PSX game by newcomers Neon.

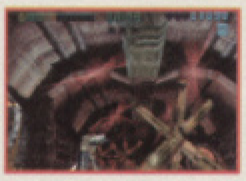
Here at MEAN MACHINES, we seem to get software houses' new visions of the future every week. And look, here's another one.

So, does Tunnel B1 conform with the long established clichés of the Sci-Fi shoot-'em-up genre? Let's run through the check list scrawled on the control console of our hi-tech landskimmer attack craft thingy. A dystopian Blade Runner-esque landscape? Check. Mad dictator bent on world domination? Check. One man up against an entire army? Check. A heavily armoured hovering death platform t? Check. Overuse of rhetorical questions? Check.





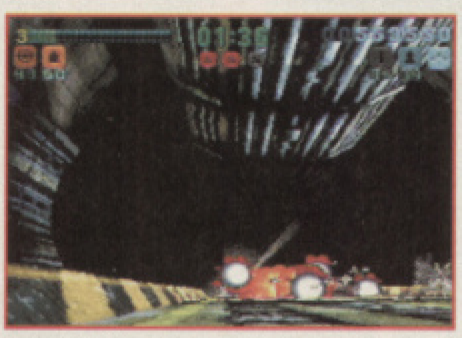








TUNNEL B1









WIPED OUT

The craft you pilot in Tunnel B1 appears to be related to the anti-gravity ships from Wipeout in that it hovers, it's heavily armed and it's damned manoeuvrable. By using a combination of the brake and accelerator, you can pull off power slides that enable you to circle your enemies, and so avoid taking hits. This trick also comes in handy when hurtling down narrow twisting tunnels at breakneck speeds.

But never fear! Your craft is fitted with some kind of hi-tech shock absorbers (wouldn't you just know it) that mean smacking into walls at 200 mph causes no damage. And with our driving techniques that's definitely a godsend.

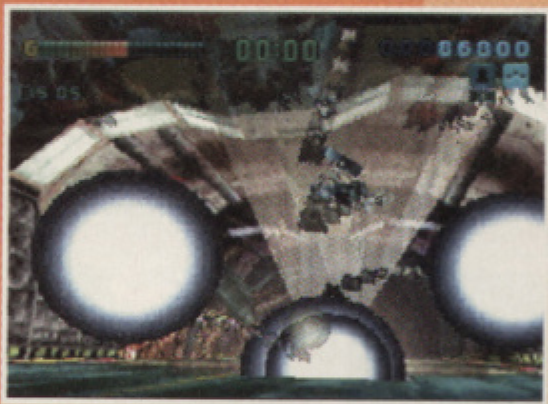






LOCK AND LOAD

Players begin the game armed only with a measly machine gun but there are ample opportunities to upgrade your arsenal throughout Tunnel B1. There are two groups of weapons; primary and secondary. On the primary side, there are machine gun which can be powered-up to become double or triple barrelled beasts, and there are also rockets and missiles which can be boosted to activate twin-firing and heat-seeking capabilities. Then there are the lasers, which can be upgraded to a twin beam Neon laser monster that causes double the usual damage! Your secondary weapons are composed of flares and mines. Flares distract enemies' heat-seeking missiles, while mines are useful for blowing up doors and containers. These devices can also be thrown forwards like grenades. Players can also collect smart bombs that deal out death to all but the strongest adversaries.















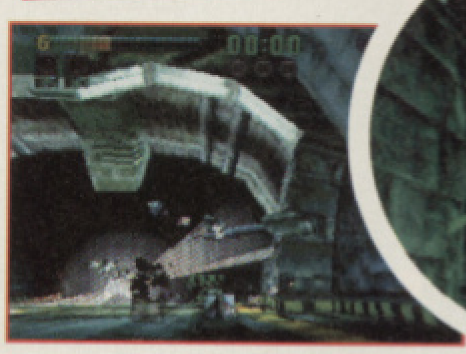


MISSION CONTROL

As explosions rock the screen it's often easy to forget mission priorities. The craft's handy on-board CPU presents you with primary and secondary objectives at the start of each level. The primary objectives have to be achieved to exit the stage, while the secondary targets are usually weapon upgrades that are useful but not essential. As well as these mission directives there are also optional objectives that are not detailed by your CPU. During the course of any particular level, these objectives may actually change, and your overblown trip-computer will kindly update you if this is the case. I wonder if it talks like an old Austin Maestro? Boot. Lid. Open. Crackle.







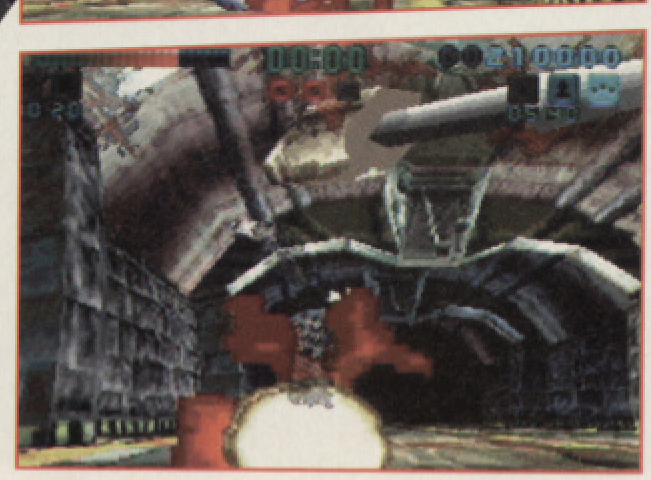




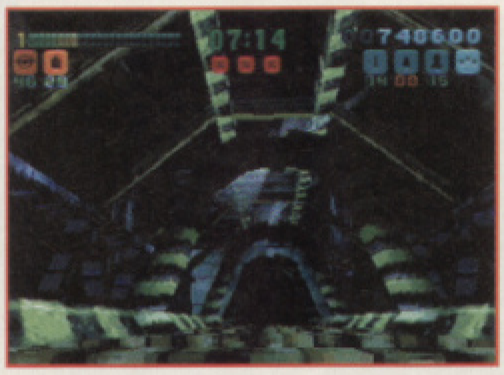
GENERATION X

The majority of levels in Tunnel B1 have tight time limits that force you to reach certain checkpoints before heavy blast doors slam irrevocably closed. Sometimes you'll also find sealed doors on your way to the checkpoint. If these can't be blown up with mines, it's likely that they will be held closed by a colour coded generator located elsewhere in the level. Go and blow up the generator, and the relevant doors will open for a limited period of time whilst the generator is under repair.







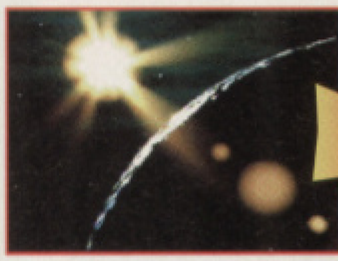


CHERNOBYL FALLOUT



Aside from the regular enemies, such as automated guns, mortar cannons and laser turrets, there are other more subtle hazards in Tunnel B1. The shield energy you collect is radioactive, and it must be picked up within a few seconds of destroying its container, or else it'll explode, showering harmful energy over a small area. Destroying a generator has a similar effect, only the radiation gradually spreads throughout the tunnels from the source of the explosion. So you'd better move quickly if you don't want your teeth loosened.





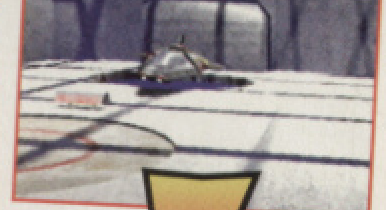


WHICH IS BEST?

Tunnel B1 first appeared on PlayStation earlier this year and was the first game to emerge from new German coders Neon. Since then they have taken time to tweak and optimise the game engine for the Saturn version and, as far as we can tell, it runs a slightly faster than the PlayStation version. Unfortunately, the transparency effects in the PlayStation game haven't fared so well. Although they now have that familiar 'net curtain' appearance, they still flare convincingly as you pass them. The Saturn version also has a whole new level, so on balance it would appear that the Sega's machine has for once received a conversion superior to the original!









scores

GRAPHICS In short, it looks great. The rendered intro is cool, the 3D engine is fast, smooth and detailed, although the lighting is a bit ambitious for the Saturn. The only detractor is that the viewpoint is a bit close to the ground. **90**

SOUND Stirring military-style tunes that set the mood adequately. A bit of the old techno! techno! techno! might have been better though. There are some realistic weapon effects but the speech is a little unenthusiastic. **88**

PLAYABILITY After you've reconfigured the awkward default controls, Tunnel plays like a cross between Doom and Wipeout. The enemies are mainly static, so initial excitement fades pretty quickly. **82**

LASTABILITY The lack of action in the earlier levels is off-putting, and unfortunately the only real tension is generated by strict time limits. It'll take a while to complete though, if you can be bothered. **70**

overall

A technically accomplished blastathon that's both frustrating and a bit dull at the same time. There are worse games you could spend your Xmas cash on. **78**







comment



MATT

It's not very often that single format magazines take a stand and state that a version of a game is actually better on a rival machine. Alas such is the case with Tunnel B1. Although Neon are to be commended for attempting to push the Saturn's graphical capabilities just that little bit further the lack of those all-important PlayStation transparencies and lighting effects really do let this version of the game down. Unlike Steve I feel the Saturn's scrappy visuals seriously affect the gameplay as it's often difficult to speed around each stage without wondering if the game is actually finished or not. If you can ignore its obvious flaws though there's still a competent shoot-'em-up to be found beneath Tunnel B1's patchwork quilt exterior. Movement is smooth and glitch free although players will find their craft oversteering at the most inopportune moments. Likewise you often feel like you're sitting too far down in the vehicle and it's surprising that there's no way to elevate your guns to knock out airborne enemies.

comment



STEVE

Tunnel B1 certainly looks fantastic. While the lighting effects are not quite as impressive as in the PlayStation game, the overall effect is similar. It also plays well, like a combination of Wipeout and a first person perspective shoot-'em-up. However, once you've got over the general spiffiness of the graphics, you begin to realise that the gameplay isn't all that involving. The first three levels are supposedly 'training', to ease you into the game, but not a lot happens in them and this can be off-putting if you're expecting fast paced shoot-'em-up action from start to finish. Then again things don't get much better later on either, since the majority of your adversaries are stationary and so you can just sit there blasting at them before scooting off to the next target. The time limits add a kind of impetus, but it's a pretty artificial way of forcing you to go faster. As it is, Neon have shown they are the business on the technical side, now they just need to come with some faster, more intense gameplay for the inevitable Tunnel B2, and they'll have a real corker on their hands.

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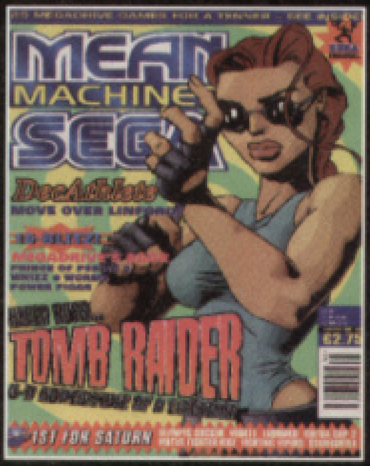
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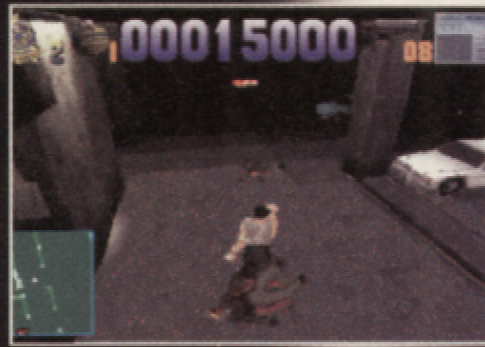
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Game Name	Die Hard Trilogy				
Publisher	Fox Interactive				
Release	January	Price	£44.99		
Game Style	Shooting/Driving				
Import?	✗	Linkplay?	✗	Players	1
Control	Joypad/Virtua Gun				
Background	The entire smash action movie series on one disc.				



Take three explosive Hollywood films, a development company known for its top quality movie license conversion and add a body count somewhere in the thousands. The result? Die Hard Trilogy!

It's surprising that no one has attempted to convert any if not all of the Die Hard movies until Probe were handed the task last year. As a fledgling company Fox Interactive has some of the most powerful entertainment licenses at its disposal. By combining their high profile products with a proven developer such as Probe the results were bound to be nothing less than spectacular. Although not featuring Bruce Willis' likeness and voice, Die Hard Trilogy still manages to delivers plenty of bang for your buck.















DIE HARD TRILOGY



Sticking closely to the events in the first movie, Die Hard sees New York cop, Detective John McClane, taking on a whole barrel load of Eurotrash terrorists who have seized control of the high-tech Nakatomi Plaza. The villains (fronted by confirmed psycho Hans Grüber) plan to steal millions of dollars worth of negotiable bonds stored in the building's maximum security vault. Of course they've reckoned without the sudden appearance of McClane whose gung-ho antics cause more than a few headaches. Players must swiftly guide McClane through 24 challenging polygonised levels, picking off bad guys with pinpoint accuracy, dodging hostile fire and rescuing terrified hostages. Once a certain amount of terrorists have been dispatched a bomb is armed somewhere within the section and must be deactivated to progress. Free enough hostages and players are whisked off to the rooftop bonus stage.

VIEW TO A KILL

Die Hard's third person perspective provides players with the optimum angle with which to explore their 3D environment. Walls smoothly dissolve as McClane passes by, his eerie x-ray-type vision enabling locked rooms to be given the once over before entering, and your view is hardly ever obscured by annoying scenery. However, players only interact with a small fraction of the scenery. Although there are some cool graphical touches to be found, such as blowing up the cars in the garage thereby activating the sprinkler system, you still can't riddle office walls with bullet holes, destroy computer terminals or generally redecorate the place with lead. These gripes aside, as a stand-alone title, this section of Die Hard Trilogy would have been worth the price of admission alone but better is to come.





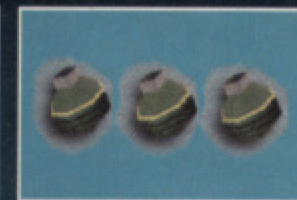


NOW I HAVE A MACHINE GUN!

Initially only armed with a standard police-issue 15-shot automatic pistol, McClane can boost his arsenal by locating weapon crates scattered throughout each section or by claiming extra firepower and demolition devices from fallen enemies.



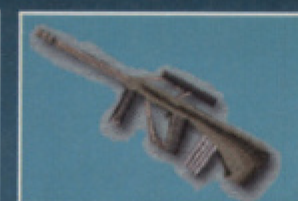
PISTOL
Standard police-issue 15-shot automatic. McClane's default weapon. Automatically reloads after the clip has been emptied.



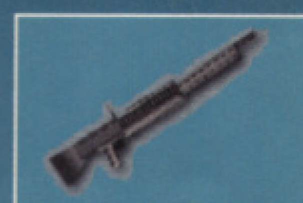
GRENADES
Find your bad guys, lob a grenade into 'em then roll out of harm's way. The impressive explosion will take out the terrorists.



TEAR GAS GRENADE
Evil cans that emit a choking cloud of green gas. Incapacitates tough guys in the surrounding area.



ASSAULT RIFLE
A light but deadly military grade weapon which fires high-power 7.62mm bullets.



M60 MACHINE GUN
The king of weapons. The M60 is a ideal for mowing down groups of terrorists.

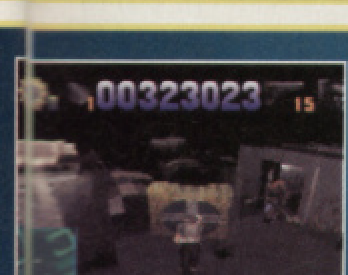


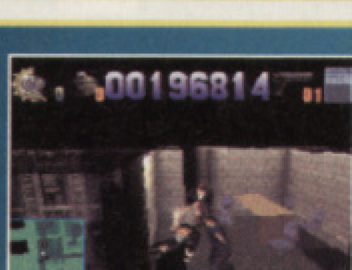
MP5 SUB-MACHINE GUN
The MP5 is a small hand-held weapon that fires 9mm ammunition.













There's level after level of explosive action in Die Hard.



DIE HARD 2: DIE HARDER

I DON'T LIKE TO LOSE

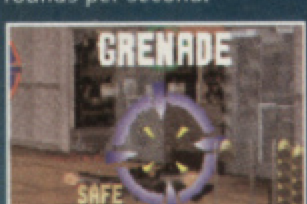
As in Die Hard, McClane may also pick up the 12 Gauge shotgun and MP5. The 15-shot pistol is carried as standard and used when other weapons have been used.



M16 ASSAULT RIFLE
A few well-placed bursts with the M167 is enough to send any terrorist scurrying for cover. Fires over 100 rounds per second.



RPG ROCKET
Certain 'Secret Routes' are available in each section. Some of which allow extra weapons such as the explosive rockets to be collected.



FRAG GRENADE
Not as lethal as the RPG Rocket but its shockwave is still powerful enough to take out tightly packed groups of terrorists. Used as a last resort.



HEALTH
Usually available by shooting the Coke machines scattered throughout the airport terminal. Extra health is vital for McClane's survival.



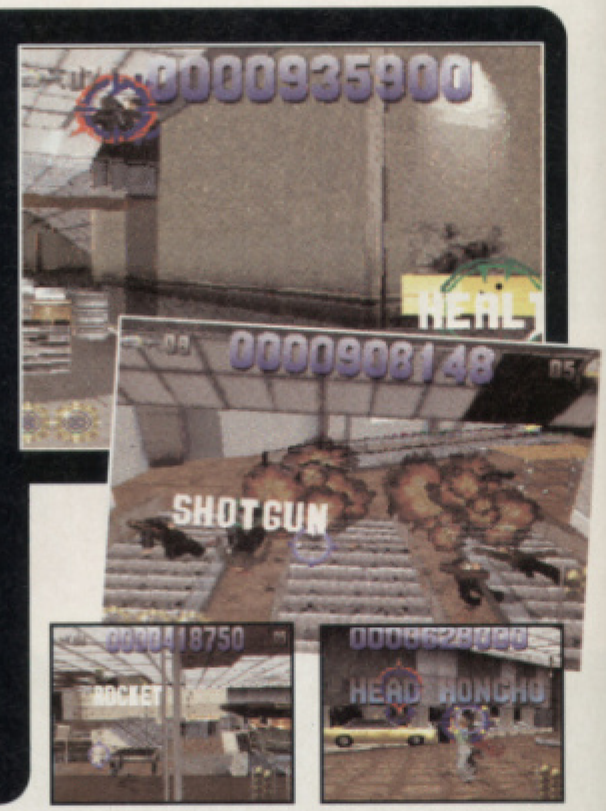
MEDICAL KIT
Keep an eye out for crates in each section. Some of these contain the all-healing, life-saving First Aid kit.



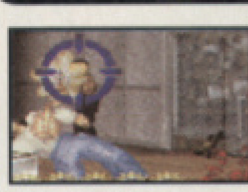
SHIELD
Similar in effect to the bullet-proof vest. This device repels enemy fire for a few seconds but will wear off.

Flying by air is supposed to be the safest form of travel. Of course who ever said that obviously never met John McClane! The second Trilogy title switches into high gear with a first person Virtua Cop-style shoot-'em-up. This time poor Brucie finds himself tackling even more tricky terrorist types at a snow-covered Dulles Airport. It seems the sneaky swines have concocted a devilish plan to liberate a notorious South American drug lord travelling to the US to stand trial. Only visiting the airport to meet his wife, McClane is called upon to do his hero bit once more. How can the same crap happen to the same guy twice?

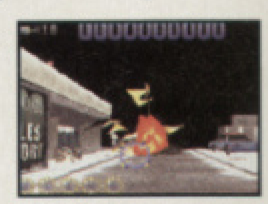
It would probably have been an easy cop-out for Probe to give players a sub-standard, on-the-rails, shoot-'em-up but what we're treated to instead is far superior. Interaction is everything in Die Harder and players are given free reign to damage everything on-screen. Blow up the harmless taxis in the car park, take out those annoyingly tacky gift shops in the airport lobby and leave innocent civilians wishing they'd travelled by coach instead. In fact each level can take so much punishment that players can leave a once pristine area decimated.

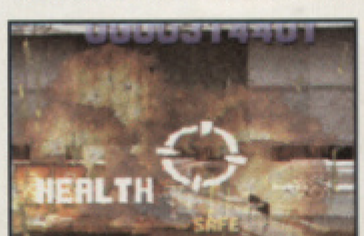


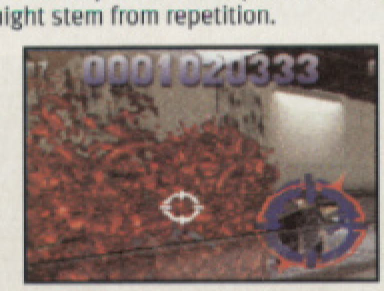
TERRORIST DEMANDS



The game moves you through each level, stopping at certain terrorist-filled points. Die Harder is a little more forgiving than many games of this genre as the player's view actually extends beyond the screen's pre-defined borders giving the impression that you are actually controlling more of the action themselves. Comedic elements abound, from hapless tourists getting caught in crossfires to terrorists being reduced to charred skeletons. McClane's unconvincing cries of "Sorry pal!" add further black humour, though they are heard a little too often. The variety and chaotic pace far outweigh any weaknesses in this section that might stem from repetition.









DIE HARD: WITH A VENGEANCE



The most popular section of the Trilogy, at least according to your ever reliable MMS team, is without a doubt, Die Hard: With A Vengeance.

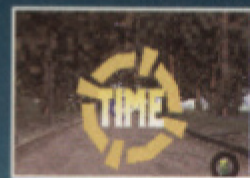
Obviously with plenty of amazing racing games already on the market, you'd expect this climatic finale to be something rather special. As indeed it truly is.

Set in the crowded, litter-filled streets of New York City, our eponymous hero faces possible his toughest case yet. In revenge for the death of his barmy brother (played in Die Hard by the wickedly evil Alan Rickman), supreme nutcase, Simon, has planted a series of bombs throughout the Big Apple and challenged McClane to locate them before they detonate. With an unwilling civilian at his side (Harlem shop keeper Zeus) and the clock ticking away, McClane has to drive a variety of vehicles through each level, locate the devices and ram into them, thereby saving the city from fiery destruction. So far we've driven a taxi cab and police car but there are other hidden vehicles rumoured to exist.

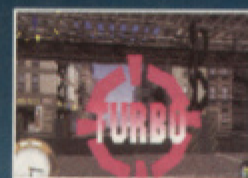
WE'RE NOT GONNA MAKE IT!

Even though McClane is bombing through the bustling streets of New York City he can still collect bonus items to aid him in his mission:

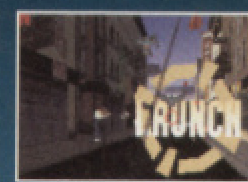




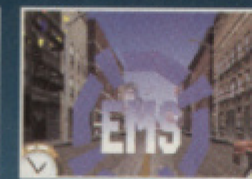
TIME
McClane needs as much time as possible to reach the bombs. Collect these for extra seconds.



TURBO
If time's about to run out, use a Turbo boost to speed up your vehicle. Control tricky becomes tricky.



LAUNCH
Scattered throughout each area. Hit one and your vehicle performs a cool Dukes of Hazard-style leap.



EMS
This icon summons an ambulance which then plows through traffic clearing a path for you.



LET ME DRIVE!



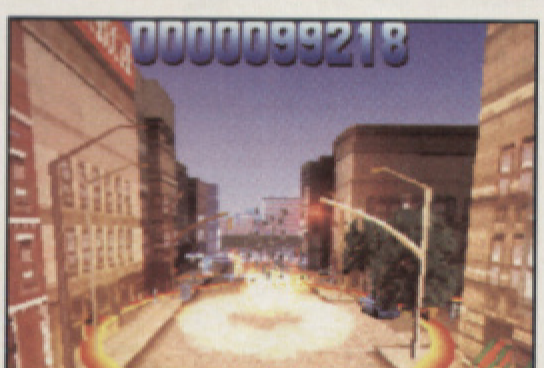
The thrill of hurtling through a busy intersection, ramming cars out of the way, mowing down citizens and just making it to a bomb in time is almost indescribable. NYC itself is a hoot but wait until you switch to the in-car view and begin plowing through Central Park! Blood splatters the windscreen before the wipers do their job and restore visibility. Brilliant stuff. Each of the vehicles, accessed by stopping off in a nearby parking lot, handles realistically and even poor drivers will be taking tyre-screaming 90° turns.

Navigating is made simple thanks to an on-screen indicator arrow that shows where the next bomb is located. One major element that's missing from this section of the game is a possible two player mode, using both characters from this section. Still, it has to be said that Probe have ended the whole package with an explosive finale worthy of this classic action series.















comment



MATT

After extensively playing the PlayStation version I was worried that the Saturn would receive a watered-down version of Die Hard Trilogy. I should have had more confidence in those Probe perfectionists. As a collection of three distinct yet highly playable games this title manages to capture the look and feel of the Die Hard movies with frightening ease. The loss of various PSX transparencies and a rougher visual look are the only real shortcomings and once you're in the thick of the action you'll be too busy to notice any minor imperfections. Personally I'd rate Die Hard: With A Vengeance as my particular favourite section. With Die Hard Trilogy under its belt, Fox Interactive will definitely be THE software company to watch out for in '97.

comment



GUS

I agree with Matt that the Die Hard: With A Vengeance section is the best part of Die Hard Trilogy. The gameplay idea is one of the most entertaining I've seen in some time, and the elaborations of the later levels will lead you back to this segment again and again. The other two parts are fine in terms of graphics and overall appeal, although the Dulles Airport section looks quite ropey in comparison to Virtua Cop 2. Probe have obviously not seen multiple scenario games as an easy option, and there's no sense of being short-changed with any one section. Humorous, well-paced, consistently impressive on the technical side, this is one of the year's best.

scores

GRAPHICS Although slightly rough in some scenes the speed of the game and attention to detail more than make up for any visual shortcomings. Realistic explosions and impact effects. **87**

SOUND Although the game doesn't actually use the movie Trilogy's score or Bruce Willis' voice, the atmosphere is still spot-on. Compelling tunes back-up the action perfectly. **90**

PLAYABILITY Play Die Harder with the Virtua Gun and you'll never look at Virtua Cop the same way again. The final section is totally responsive. You don't need to be a brilliant driver to master this level. **89**

LASTABILITY As the difficulty level is pitched just right, each section should take you a while to successfully complete. There's definitely plenty of replay value and the back-up feature makes DHT less frustrating. **90**

overall

A fantastic conversion of three cool action movies. Apart from that missing Willis presence Die Hard Trilogy is a highly polished package. **92**

review

Game Name	NBA Jam Extreme		
Publisher	Acclaim		
Release	December	Price	£44.99
Game Style	Basketball		
Import?	✕	Linkplay? ✕	Players 1-4
Control	Joypad		
Background	Based on Acclaim's perennial NBA Jam license.		

It's a proven fact that if you break down all Saturn releases by genre, then 95% of them will be basketball games. Or at least that's how it seems to us.

This is about the time of year when the annual sports game updates get wheeled out once again. Since just about every software company and their auntie have had a crack at a basketball game at one time or another, we get buried under a veritable mountain of the things. And so with each new NBA license, it becomes harder and harder to write an original and/or funny introductory paragraph. Still, at least these titles give us an excuse to print classic over-the-top catchphrases and cliched statements such as "Boom-Shaka-Laka!"











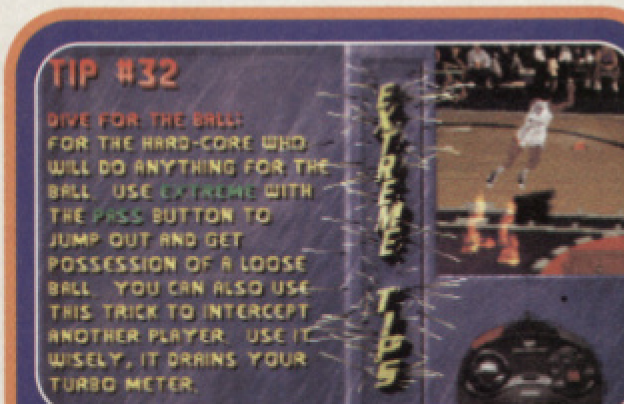
APPLE JELLY

As the first 32 bit update of the series, NBA Jam Extreme features courts and players made of polygons, rather than the side-scrolling sprites of old. Players have even been motion captured to ensure they dunk properly. Aside from this next-gen gloss, all the familiar NBA Jam zaniness is intact. A Turbo button gives your player an extra burst of speed and causes flames to erupt from his trainers as he runs. There's also a new Extreme button that lets players pull off even more outlandish moves.

i love this stuff!

ORANGE MARMALADE

As if over-the-top hoop action wasn't enough, NBA Jam Extreme also contains a big heads mode which give players top-heavy craniums. This mode is handy for picking out your player in the CPU melee. Other bizarre features can be accessed by entering secret codes. Another quirk, which seems to occur randomly, is having the ball replaced with what looks like a pink wedge of cheese. Stranger things have happened. Maybe.



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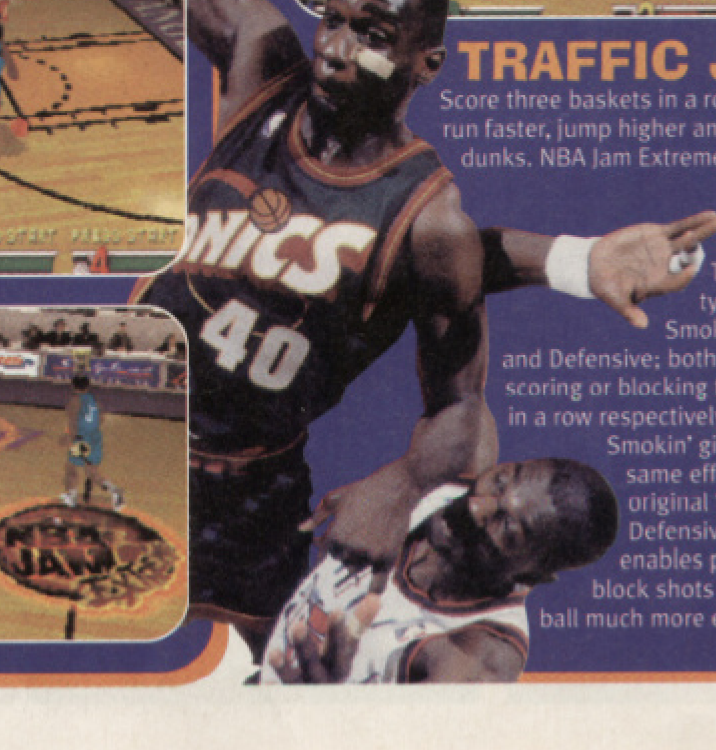

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TRAFFIC JAM

Score three baskets in a row, and you'll run faster, jump higher and score more dunks. NBA Jam Extreme also features a new mode called 'Smokin''. There are two types of Smokin's: Offensive and Defensive; both activated by scoring or blocking three baskets in a row respectively. An Offensive Smokin' gives much the same effects as the original 'On Fire', but a Defensive Smokin' enables players to block shots and steal the ball much more easily.

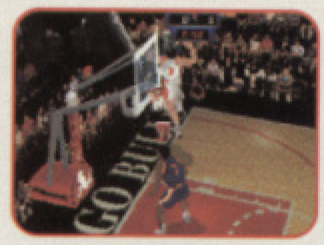


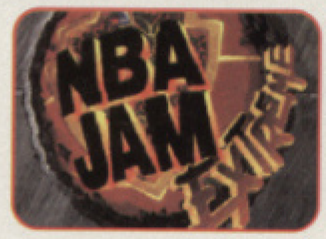
LOGANBERRY PRESERVE

There are loads of real life NBA teams available with 29 squads from the Eastern and Western leagues. Games take the form of two-on-two matches, and each team has a squad of six to choose from. By pressing pass and shoot together, you can force the CPU player into action, but you can't move them directly. On the team select screen, there's also a hidden team, helpfully identified by a row of questions marks. Whether it contains such celebrities as Bill Clinton, like the original Jam games, remains to be seen.









NBA JAM EXTREME

TOMATO CHUTNEY

The commentary in NBA Jam Extreme also deserves a mention, if only for sheer hilarity, as the disembodied voice speaks in a very dry monotone. Consequently when a player is about to achieve a Smokin', he intones "I smell smoke" with almost no emotion. His "Boom-Shaka-Laka" is pretty awesome too.











comment



MATT

I feel that Steve's completely missed the point here. The whole idea behind NBA Jam Extreme is that it's supposed to be over-the-top and outrageous. The series has only ever been a mad, and even slightly cartoony, approximation of the sport, so the fact that it doesn't offer the scope of a serious sim like EA's NBA Live '97 doesn't matter one iota. All the moves are so stupendously over-the-top that you can't possibly take the game seriously, and so the only recourse is to have a damn good time playing it instead. NBA Jam Extreme also offers a true next-gen update, whereas the previous NBA Jam: TE conversion looked a bit out of place on the Saturn. It's all the odd special modes that really add the icing to the cake. After all where else can you play as big headed giant? No one likes serious basketball in this country anyway, of all the titles available, this one has the most selling potential.

comment



STEVE

NBA Jam Extreme isn't too bad although it does suffer from the same two-on-two lack of action as it's Megadrive stable mate, NBA Hangtime. However, it does at least update the Jam formula by using polygons to construct the court and players. Having said that, the players in their normal state appear to be a bit out of proportion with the court. But play in the freaky big heads mode and it doesn't matter so much. There are also an abundance of other 'hilarious' extra features in Jam Extreme, such as the ball turning into bricks and pink triangle things. But to be quite honest, so what? With only four players on court at once, games basically consist of teams taking turns to score. The courts and backgrounds look okay, but the players are a bit scrappy. Credit's due to the fantastically droll commentary but other than that Jam Extreme is a bit of a turkey: after a week you'll be fed up with it.

scores

GRAPHICS The courts are detailed and the whole the game is well presented. Special effects, like the Turbo trails and smoke, don't exactly look fantastic. More attention to detail would have been appreciated. **86**

SOUND The usual naff music, but the in-game effects are good. You get trainers squeaking, the audience yelling and chanting and so on. The commentator speaks in a brilliant dry monotone - the best part of the game. **83**

PLAYABILITY As with other basketball games, Jam Extreme is easy to pick up but it seem at times that the players aren't responding to your commands. With only four players on court, games can also be a bit too simplistic. **83**

LASTABILITY The simple gameplay doesn't encourage long term play. Big head mode is good for a laugh though. The best test of lastability is whether you actually like basketball. If you don't, you won't be buying it anyway. **78**

overall

Not bad at all, but if you're not into the 'ker-azy' angle then a more serious sim like EA's NBA Live series might be more up your street. **86**

review

Game Name	Batman Forever: TAG
Publisher	Acclaim
Release	December · Price £44.99
Game Style	Beat-'em-up
Import? ✗	Linkplay? ✗ · Players 1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	The Dark Knight makes his coin-op to Saturn debut.

The Bat is back and he's battier than ever! Forget last year's dismal Megadrive outing, the boys from Iguana Entertainment have just completed a caped crusader coin-op conversion.





You may have already played Batman Forever: The Arcade Game but chances are, due to limited distribution, you won't yet have had the chance to test out Acclaim's bone-crunching bruiser. Following the basic plot of the most successful Bat-outing to date, players take on the twin roles of the Dark Knight Detective and Robin, the Boy Wonder, as they roam the streets of Gotham City in search of Two-Face, The Riddler and a horde of heinous henchmen. These vile villains have concocted a scheme to control the minds of every innocent citizen with a device that saps brain waves. Time is running out and only the combined might of the Dynamic Duo can stop their nefarious plans!





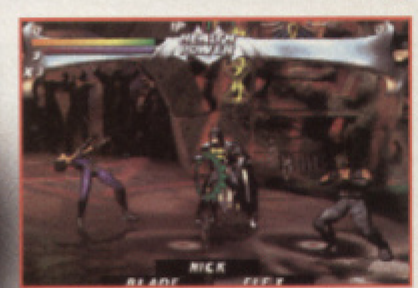
BATMAN FOREVER
THE ARCADE GAME

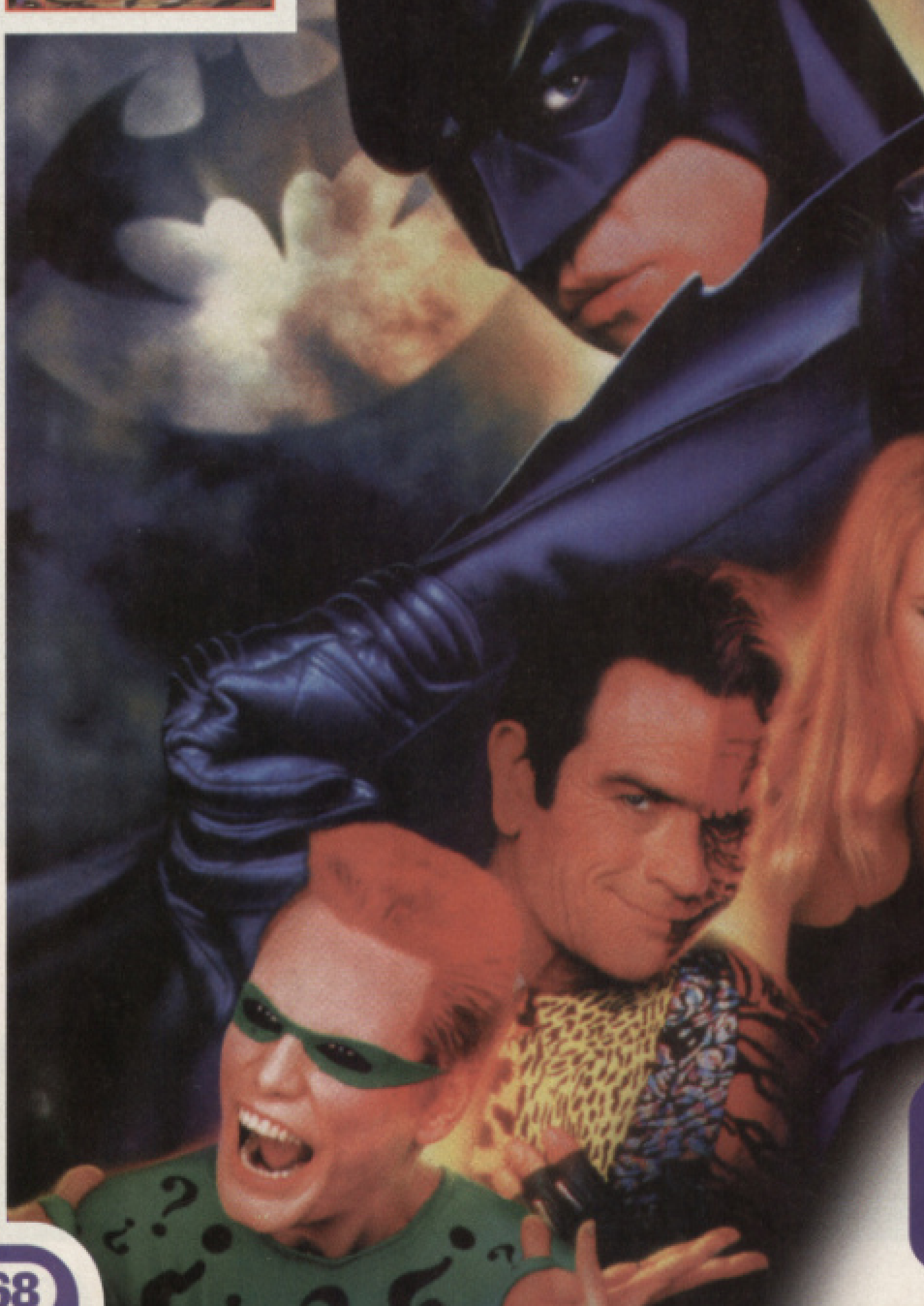










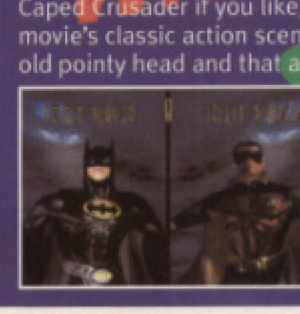


MEN IN TIGHTS

WHACK!

Although players may choose to battle through each increasingly testing stage as either Batman or Robin, there's definitely more fun to be had in the two player mode. Here both players may select the same character (yes, you can both be the Caped Crusader if you like) or simply recreate the movie's classic action scenes by teaming-up both old pointy head and that annoying brat in tights. Female Saturn owners in particular, will no doubt have their wishes finally fulfilled as they now have the opportunity to play with Chris O'Donnell.









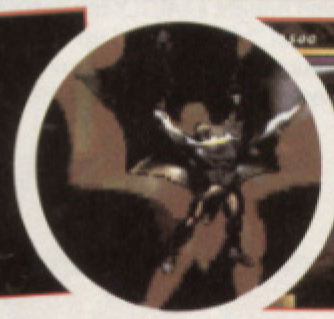
STREET FIGHTERS

Similar in style to Sega's classic Streets of Rage series, Batman Forever requires players to move through horizontally scrolling levels, battling a variety of thugs and bizarre villains. Fortunately our heroes are made of tough stuff and capable of taking out the trash with punches, kicks and multi-hit combination moves. These 'Combos' are very similar to those in most beat-'em-ups and a successful string of hits will seriously drain an opponent's energy meter. Defeat an enemy and a Power-Up icon is left behind enabling players to boost their abilities. Once fully powered-up, Batman and Robin can pull-off some amazing combos.











TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Although both Batman and Robin are trained to the peak of physical perfection even macho superheroes need a helping hand from time to time. To cope with certain situations, the Dynamic Duo both wear fully equipped utility belts containing all manner of useful gadgets. These devices are also scattered throughout each stage, sometimes in plain sight, sometimes hidden in crates and barrels. Once collected these icons may also be powered-up. For example, at power level 1, the Batarang travels in a straight line. At level 2, it becomes a glowing, homing Batarang. At level 3, the Batarang morphs into a bat and sticks to its enemy.

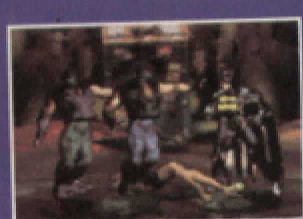
BATARANGS



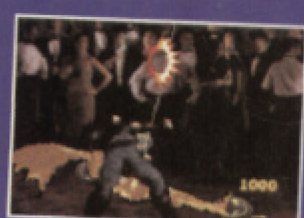
TASER



BAT-BOLAS



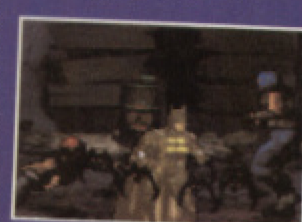
GRAPPLE



STUN BOMBS



BAT-CALL











comment



STEVE

Apart from Streets of Rage, I've never really had a 'thing' for these side scrolling beat-'em-ups. In fact I don't know why Matt has given Batman Forever a reasonable mark. As I far as I can see it's a bit of a travesty. Maybe it's just my eyes playing up, but the graphics are terrible: the main characters are blocky as they come towards the screen, enemies and backgrounds are uninspired and the special effects are dire. Finishing the game in a little under two hours I was practically bored to tears, as there's hardly any variation throughout each level. Still, Batman Forever does one thing very well. It lives up to the old adage that 'movie licenses are rubbish'. A bit of a boy blunder this, methinks.

comment



MATT

Batman Forever: The Arcade Game isn't exactly a landmark 32 bit title, it's worth remembering that not every half-decent Saturn game has been ported over from a Model 2 arcade board. In fact the coin-op version of Batman Forever was developed using Sega's ST-V (or Titan) hardware which was also utilised to produce Golden Axe: The Duel and Baku Baku Animal. The results are certainly up to Iguana Entertainment's previous standards but that's not necessarily a good thing. The main hurdle in Batman Forever's desperate downward dash is the fact that side scrolling beat-'em-ups just aren't popular at the moment. Final Fight and Streets of Rage have long since been superseded by 2D and 3D beat-'em-ups and the movie license itself is hardly a hot property (why wasn't this released when Batman Forever became a sell-thru video?). If you can't get enough of this style of game then BF:TAG will keep you busy for a few hours but you're better off waiting for Batman & Robin in '97.

scores

GRAPHICS Sprites suffer some reduction in size due to a lack of internal Saturn RAM. There's noticeable slowdown when multiple opponents appear on screen. Visual effects are hardly impressive. **72**

SOUND Why wasn't the movie's original film score used instead of this AOR rubbish? Weapon and special move effects are effective enough but there should have been more digitised speech. **59**

PLAYABILITY Streets of Rage fans will instantly get to grips with the game's intuitive controls but newcomers may be confused by the sheer chaotic on-screen action. **68**

LASTABILITY Although the game's difficulty setting will prove to be a tough enough challenge, once you've completed each stage there's little incentive to play through them again. **56**

overall

As an arcade conversion Batman Forever is fairly accurate but as a successful Saturn title it falls flat on its face. Let's hope Batman and Robin is a distinct improvement.

68

review	
Game Name	NHL'97
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Release	Out Now — Price £44.99
Game Style	Sports
Import? ✗ — Linkplay? ✗ — Players	1-8
Control	Joypad
Background	Started life as EA Hockey on the Megadrive.

Good old EA! You can always rely on them to polish off the old classics, give them a bit of a dust, and churn them out again to earn even more cash! Next up on that ever growing list is NHL '97.

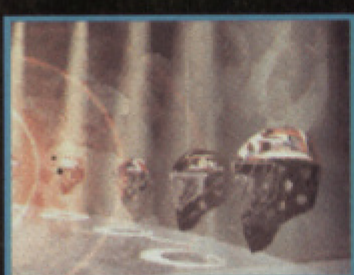


You all know the score by now. EA swears blind that this is going to be the finest example yet of its renowned ice hockey series. Punters walk into games shops around the country, in a Paul McKenna type trance, pick it up from the rack and buy it. Upon taking it home and loading it up, they sit there playing for hours until they actually realise that it was all a big con, and they've gone and bought EXACTLY the same game as it's previous sequel, only with a different name! Talk about led up the garden path. However, maybe we're being a little harsh here, because this NHL is a considerable step forward when compared to other titles in this frosty field. It actually manages to combine flash graphics with awesome playability! Sounds good to us!

NHL'97

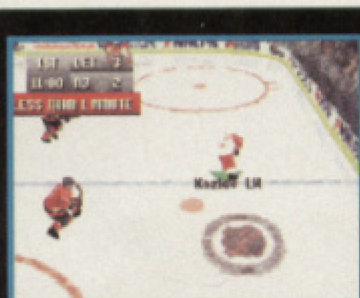


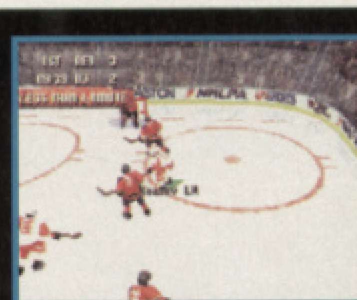




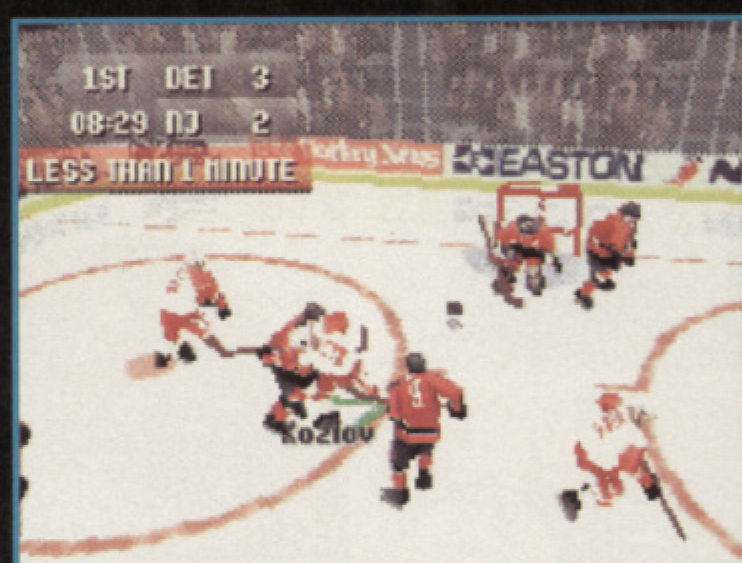
EXACTLY HOW EASY?

ce hockey games tend to fall flat in a couple of areas: the computer controlled keepers can be far too tough to beat and there are usually loads of dull, bore draws results. So here's a handy little tip that will get you goals almost 99% of the time! Skate along the side of the rink and when you reach the goal line, cut in towards the 'keeper. Move just in front of him so that he can't get the puck, and slot it in the far corner with the goalie stranded. 1-0 to Mon-tre-al!

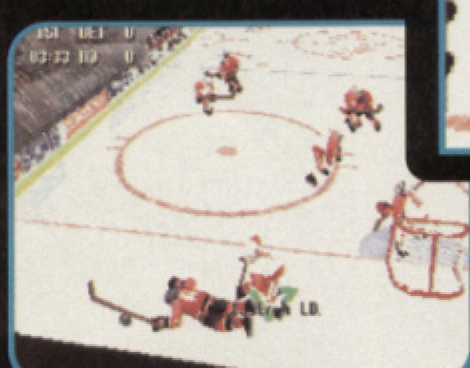






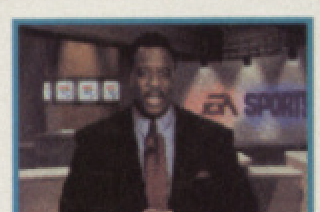




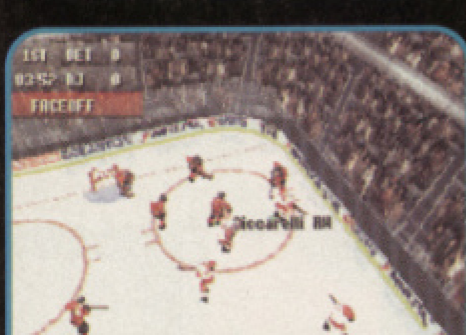


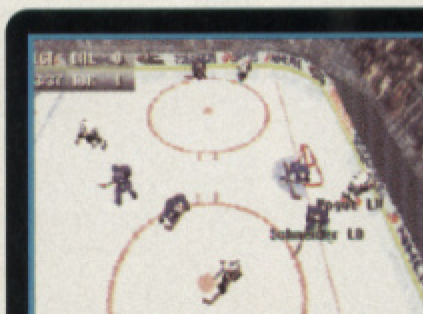
HANDBAGS AT DAWN

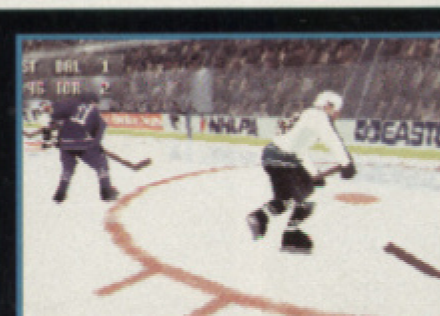
We all love a scrap now and then. Which is why there was some confusion as to why EA took the punch-ups out of NHLPA Hockey on the Megadrive all those years back. Thankfully, EA has seen the light (or a sharp left-hander headed their way!) and put them back in. HUZZAH!











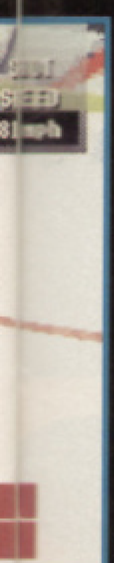






BILLY NO MATES

Sitting alone at home with your favourite game is fast becoming a thing of the past. More and more companies these days are throwing the multi-player element into games, encouraging you to go out and find some friends, bring them back to your gaff and have a quick go at on a competitive console game. NHL is no different, with up to eight players taking part simultaneously. Only Lord Snooty Moneybags is going to have enough pads and multi-taps to be able to do that and what's the bet that he's also a complete loner?



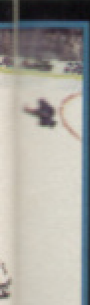
GET A LIFE!

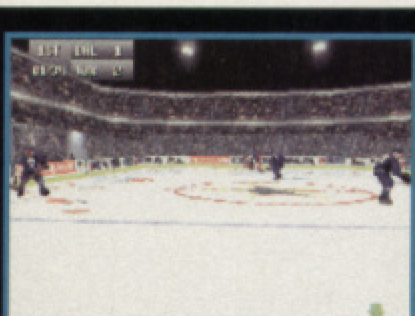
NHL can be one of those games you play for ten minutes before, or one that completely takes over your life. You have the choice of playing the complete NHL season, stretching through 82 games! You can simulate matches, meaning it pops up a score for you, save the time of attempting every match, and give you a chance to get out a little more.













comment



MATT

With all the hype surrounding the frankly disappointing FIFA '97, EA slip this and John Madden '97 in the back door! NHL manages to combine some nice graphic touches, with the same trusty playability that made the others so addictive. The sounds are as good as a realistic ice hockey game could be, with the cheesy announcer and crappy organ music. Perhaps the best thing however, is that it's instantly playable and you'll be picking up the flashy moves in no time. Yet another top NHL game from EA!

comment



STEVE

Whilst I've always been really naff at ice skating, I was quite partial to a bit of Megadrive hockey courtesy of EA's NHL series. So I'm pleased to say that NHL '97 is as good as the 16 bit games at their peak. From the completely over-the-top intro to the well presented set-up screens, the game feels like quite a bit of time has been lavished on it. There are, as you would expect from a Saturn sports game, truck loads of camera angles to choose from although some, like the Helmet Cam, are almost completely useless. But use the Classic or Isometric angles, and you get a solid, playable game of hockey. NHL '97 is packed full of authentic players, who of course us Brits have never heard of, and there are more stats than you'd know what to do with; but even if you know nothing about the players, or even the rules, you can still have a damn good ruck out there on the rink.

scores

GRAPHICS

NHL doesn't try to be too flash in the graphical department but does the job really well. Some nice alternative views to the standard one on offer. Impressive intro sequence.

68

SOUND

You can't really do too much with regards to sound in this sort of game. A few cheers, some organ music and an announcer. Big deal. Still, effects add to the realism of the game.

78

PLAYABILITY

The strongest element of the game. The difficulty is pitched just about right, and for once scoring goals isn't a problem. Once you're hooked, you won't be able to put it down.

94

LASTABILITY

Try playing the full season and see how long that takes you to complete! The huge multi-player element also gives this smart sports sim an increased lifespan.

93

overall

NHL '97 has got the classic EA playability and manages to incorporate enough of the flashy modern touches to warrant purchase. Top stuff!

86

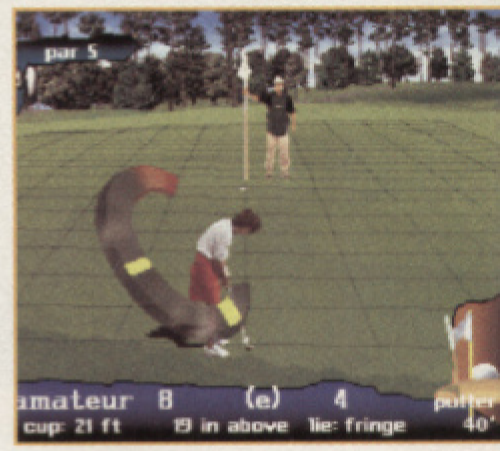
review

Game Name	PGA '97
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Release	December
Price	£44.99
Game Style	Golf Sim
Import?	✗
Linkplay?	✗
Players	1-4
Control	Joypad
Background	The latest in a long line of EA golfing sims.

PGA '97

Golf games are probably the only Saturn titles your Dad can get his head round. So you'll be pleased to know that he now has another excuse for kicking you off that 'new fangled Gameboy-thing'.

But then maybe you'd prefer him to be playing a round of simulated golf when the relatives pop-in for Christmas, instead of lying, party-hatted and comatose on the settee as usual. After Saturn owners sampled the delights of Gremlin's Actua Golf earlier this year, Electronic Arts is responding with an update of its own classic sporting sim. So don those plus fours, hire an underpaid student as your caddy, jump in a golf cart and join us as we poke around behind the bushes and see what makes PGA Tour '97 tick.

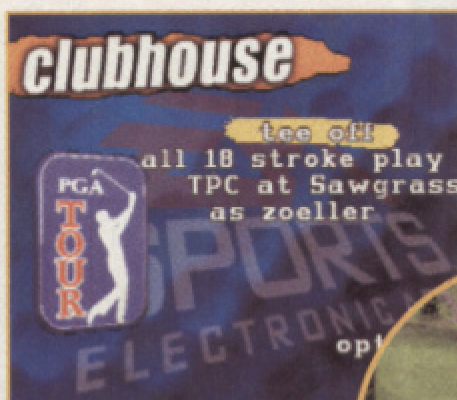








Did you know the VW Golf pick-up used to be called the Caddy. Top humour there VW.

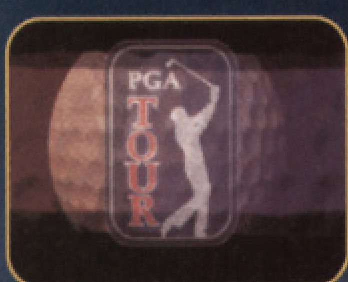






GOLF GTI

The loading times for PGA '97 are a little on the slow side. After careful consideration, we decided that the appalling loading was actually an essential feature of the game as it represented the time it takes to walk between each hole. There's another delay if you want to change the viewing angle, and there's also a long pause between taking your shot and the player's animation. Why?









A GOOD WALK SPOILED

PGA '97 offers players a staggering two courses on which to do be-Pringled battle. Both are accurate representations of real American courses, one is Spyglass Hill, California, the other is the snappily named TPC at Sawgrass, Florida. Oddly enough both of these courses are next to a beach. We reckon that's because the programmers fancied a quick holiday on the sly. There's no word on whether additional course discs will be made available, but we reckon it's a good idea as the same 36 holes just aren't going to last you very long. However, you'll still have to be a good golfer to crack each course.























POTATO SKINS

There are numerous ways you can play golf in PGA '97 as there are plenty of gameplay modes to keep you occupied through long Winter nights. After you've finished practising, you can choose between a regular 18 hole game, a Tournament, with up to four players, and the Skins game. We're not quite sure why it's called the Skins game, although Matt insists it's an American word for a wager, but it generally involves being god-like at golf. You see there's a kitty of $540,000 for each course, so each hole is worth $20,000, and if you're the first player to sink the ball on a hole then you walk away with all the cash.

TARQUIN GERBILTHROTTLER

Some of those American chaps have awfully funny names don't they? Denied a proper career due to mutated monickers, they've all turned to golf instead. So while playing PGA '97, you can expect to compete against such second rate celebrities as Chip Beck or the immortal Fuzzy Zöeller. There are sixteen real digitised golfers to play as or against, as well as eight amateurs that you can customise and label with silly names. And hey, you can even type in rude names if you want!





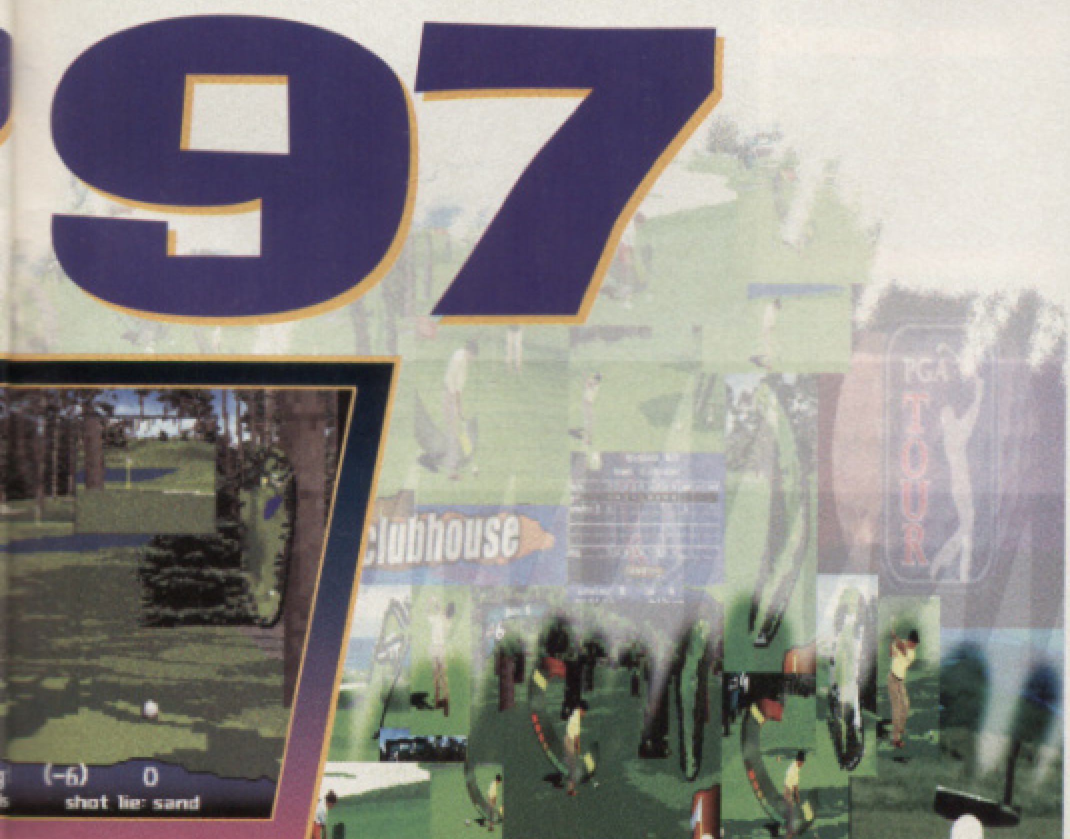


Spyglass Hill

front 9 strokes

hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	out	tot	net
par	5	4	3	4	3	4	5	4	4			
amateur 8	6									6		+1
hcp	3	13	17	9	15	7	11	1	5			

loading



comment



STEVE

Well PGA Golf was certainly the only game my Dad could handle on the Megadrive, but I doubt even he'd have the patience required to play this update. The one thing you'll notice straight away, over the shoddy graphics or lack of courses, is just how long everything takes to load. You even have to wait if you want to change the view slightly, and the pause between taking your shot and the on-screen golfer strutting his stuff is unforgivable. It wouldn't be quite so bad if PGA '97 looked like the best thing since sliced bread, but quite frankly it doesn't hold a candle to Actua Golf. There's nothing in the way of flybys, or even reverse angles when you take your shot and with just two courses available, the only lastability you'll get out of this is waiting for the damn thing to load. It's not as if I even like golf, but I'd prefer a quick round over at Peckham Municipal than to be subjected to this.

comment



MATT

As the undisputed leader in the world of software sports sims, Electronic Arts has had something of a strange time in '96. There have been many ups-and-downs with the quality of releases ranging from the excellent Madden '97 to the less-than-impressive Road Rash. The much delayed PGA Tour '97 could have been a return to form for EA but compared to the likes of Gremlin's Actua Golf, this game unfortunately falters on the fairway. The actual game mechanics as such are sound enough but a lack of varied courses, poor presentation and, as Steve has managed to mention in almost every paragraph, some truly dire loading times. The result is an unpolished title that will probably only really appeal to die-hard fans of the sport. PGA Tour '97 fails to capture the look, feel and attitude of its past glories leading you to wonder whether EA has simply lost the plot or if the task of producing an entertaining 32 bit golfing sim was just beyond their abilities.

scores

GRAPHICS

The digitised courses don't actually look too hot, so it's a mystery why each scene takes so long to load. The options screens are the best looking part of PGA '97.

68

SOUND

The ambient sound effects are a bit annoying and the commentary, whilst comprehensive, is voiced by a rather smarmy individual. Nice easy listening tunes on the title screen though.

74

PLAYABILITY

The actual mechanics of taking your shot are the same as they've been for years, but the game seems a little slow to respond at times. The heinously long loading times will drive you up the wall.

72

LASTABILITY

Only two courses means there's not a lot to see but then real golf isn't exactly that varied either. Still, with the lengthy loading times alone you'll be playing this for ages out of necessity.

62

overall

Something has gone seriously wrong here, as EA's once great PGA Tour is embroiled in a 'looks naff and takes ages to load' scandal.

63

review

Game Name	Tempest 2000
Publisher	Interplay
Release	Out Now — Price £35.00
Game Style	Shoot-'em-up
Import?	✗ — Linkplay? ✗ — Players 1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	An antique coin-op and a work of genius from Atari.





TEMPEST 2000

Retro gaming has become a heavily overloaded bandwagon just recently. Few old games pass the acid test of long term player interest. So why is Tempest any better?



Tempest was not initially a huge hit when first launched in 1982. By that time, under the weight of competition, few games were making it into the forefront of public consciousness, and Atari's Tempest would soon go into a period of spectacular decline. The game was, if anything, a little too abstract and intense for casual players, with nothing to relate to apart from sparse 3D geometry. It must have found a fan in Jeff Minter, who was a committed hippy beginning to make a name for himself with games for Commodore computers. When Atari made it's next serious attempt at a home console, some twelve years later, Jeff had the pick of their coin-op heritage from which to produce a flagship remake. He chose Tempest.

FRIED YOU

There are four ways to die in Tempest: shot; fried; spiked; caught. The cause of death depends on the enemy culprit. However, some of these threats are easier to avoid than others...



Shot

Several enemies fire energy up the web. Happily, most of that can be neutralised by a burst of your particle laser. The later enemies, like the horned demon, employ heavier weaponry.



Fried

This death will afflict you later in the game. Some creatures fry on touch, but the nastiest proponent of this method is the little pick, which charges its segment of the web.



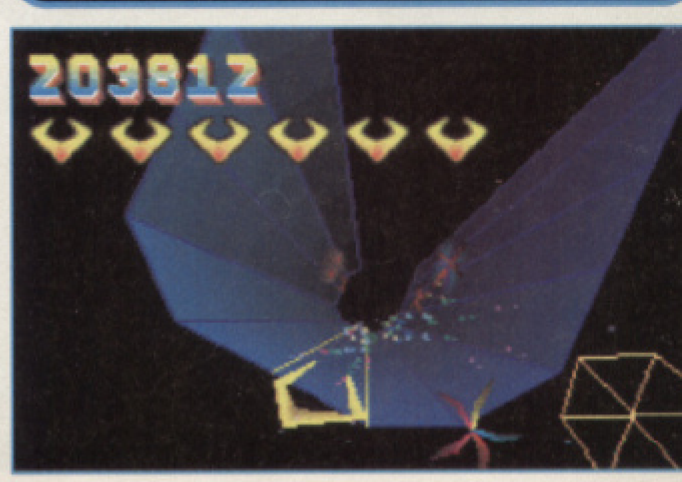
Spiked

These traps only come into play as the player speeds along the web in the process of warping to a new level, collision with them is fatal and forces the player to replay that web.

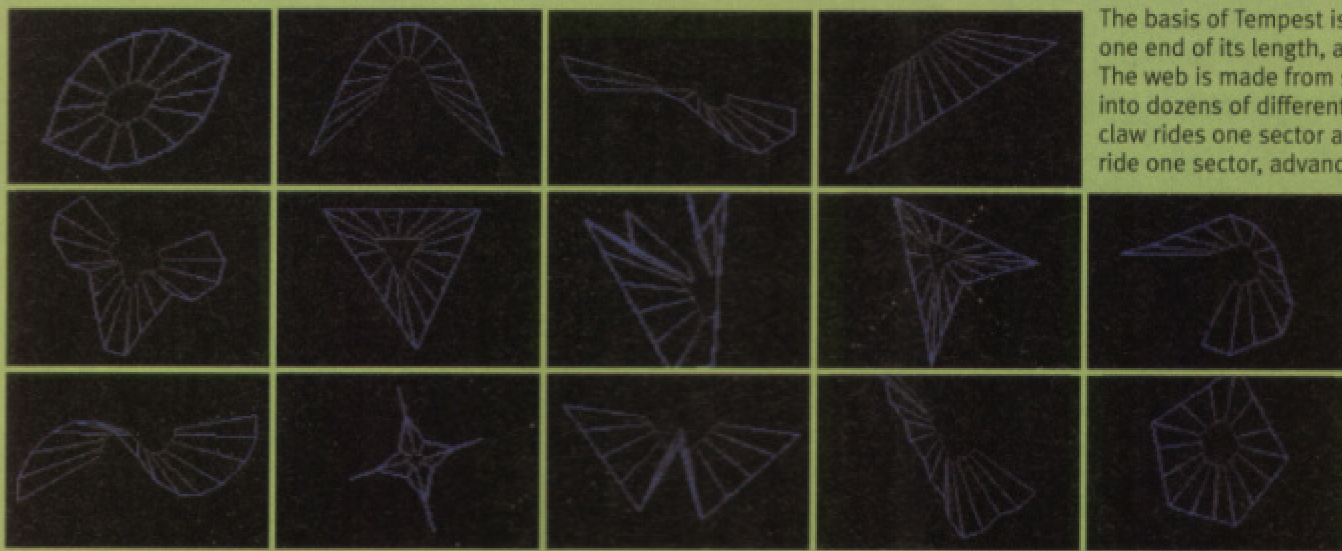


Caught

The fate that awaits the player when it collides with the commonest enemy, red bows. These will flip along the top side of the web, attempting to drag the claw into the darkness.



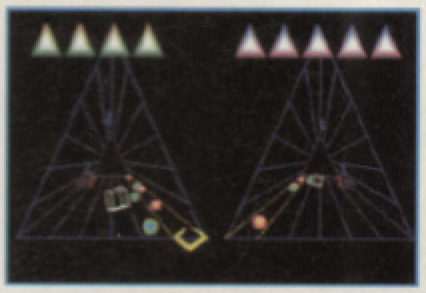
TWISTED GEOMETRY



The basis of Tempest is the web. The player is at one end of its length, as it stretches into darkness. The web is made from sectors, which are twisted into dozens of different shapes, and the player's claw rides one sector at a time. The enemies also ride one sector, advancing from the distance. The tactic of choice is to eliminate them before they reach the near end, where they are infinitely more dangerous. If they do, all is not lost. Skilful play, or the effects of one of a few special devices can save the day. Once an exact tally of enemies has been dealt with, the player then warps to the next enemy-packed web.

TRIP OUT





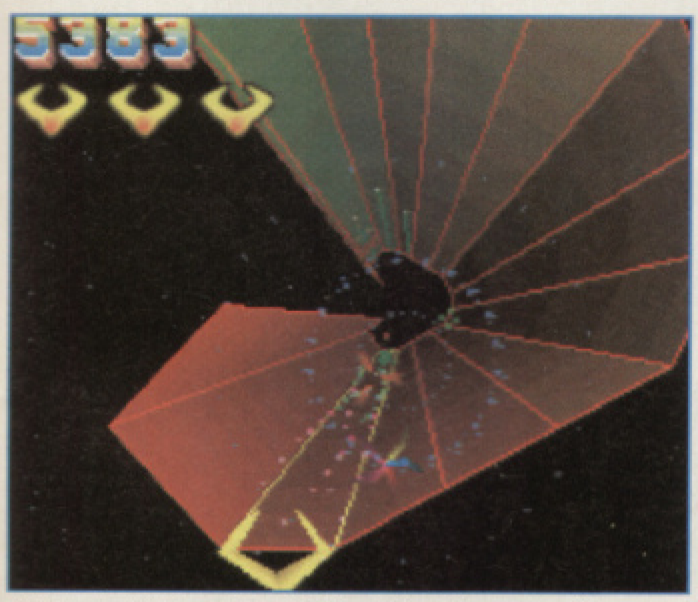
Power-up coils surge up the web from the remains of dead enemies, and these add powers to the claw cumulatively if grabbed. The ultimate reward for each web is a token to the bonus round. Three tokens warps you to one of three tranquil zones, for a challenging, non-violent sub game. The first is a drift through the ether, with the aim of passing through a series of spinning rings. The second is a journey along a channel paved with dots of light. The third is just as weird and for you to discover. The added bonus is a warp past several of the proceeding webs.



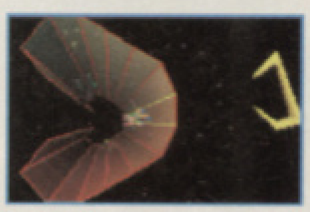
TRACE ELEMENTS

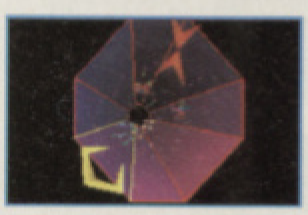
All of Tempest 2000's distinctive graphic effects are included. The title screen warps and spins in watery, pulsing fashion; the webs glow with a spectrum of gouraud shading and pyrotechnic messages explode out of the screen. As with the Jaguar game, players will be blow away by the visual elegance of Tempest 2000.





Who would have thought that the Saturn would receive a perfect copy of a Jaguar game?











comment



GUS

Tempest 2000 is gameplay at its most stripped down, basic, elemental. It was designed by a genius and its comeback was orchestrated by the uncompromising guru of gameplay, Jeff Minter. I love it, but wasn't as completely blown away as I seem to remember with the Atari Jaguar version. There's nothing missing from the conversion apart from a couple of speech effects, it's just that the package, however, timeless looks quite limited against the sumptuous eye candy flooding onto the market. Despite this, Tempest 2000 is the quintessential arcade game, with an almost religious purity and intensity.

comment



MATT

Interplay has to be commended for its latest choice in Saturn software. After last month's poor showing, the distinctly wiffy Casper, I was keeping my fingers crossed hoping Tempest 2000 would be everything its coin-op and Jaguar brethren were. Suffice to say I wasn't disappointed. Spiralling kaleidoscopic webs, insane weaponry, manic enemies and seemingly acid-induced special effects fuel what deserves to be a massive Saturn hit. Unlike other current retro titles, players need not feel embarrassed buying this for their machines. Both Tempest 2000's visual appeal and adrenalin pumping action are more than enough to keep both young gamers and seasoned vets busy for ages. Without s doubt a true blast from the past!

scores

GRAPHICS Simple, though it would not work any other way. The effect of the minimalist vector landscape and stylish abstract sprites is to make Tempest an otherwordly experience. **78**

SOUND Techno befits the subject matter, but the tracks here haven't moved on from Minter's 1994 creations. The effects are stark, but some of the speech samples are inexplicably absent. **84**

PLAYABILITY The game concept couldn't be simpler. Strange trance-like states occur with extended playing, but the difficulty curve over 99 webs is a little steep on this version. **92**

LASTABILITY Tricky to assess the long term appeal. It's easy to return to Tempest for stimulating sessions, despite the repetitive nature of the gameplay. No one is going to do those 99 levels. **84**

overall

This is a classic game that shows no sign of age due, in no small part, to a fine conversion. A renovated Tempest returns to the Hall of Fame. **88**

review

Game Name	Area 51
Publisher	GT Interactive
Release	December — Price £44.99
Game Style	Target Shooter
Import?	✗ — Linkplay? ✗ — Players 1-2
Control	Joypad/Virtua Gun
Background	Conversion of Atari Games' target-shooting coin-op.

Are we really to believe that Alien pilots, skilful enough to negotiate four light year's (at least) worth of space debris, arrive in the Earth's atmosphere and balls-up their mission by crash landing?



According to Area 51, yes. This is the latest cash-in on the current Roswell Incident/Independence Day obsession with a now-not-so-secret US military base in the Nevada Desert, apparently the arrival lounge for extra-terrestrials landing on Earth. In this particular incident, a downed craft is taken to Area 51 at some ungodly hour of the morning, and by breakfast time contact has been lost and a full-scale infiltration is underway.

The Pentagon sends in STARR, a paramilitary 'bug-hunting' unit whose ill-fitting blue uniforms make them look like tyre-fitters, but who are basically Earth's last line of defence against an ET invasion force. Their mission is to spearhead their way to Area 51's last-resort weapon — a nuclear detonator which will annihilate the invaders before they gain a foothold.



















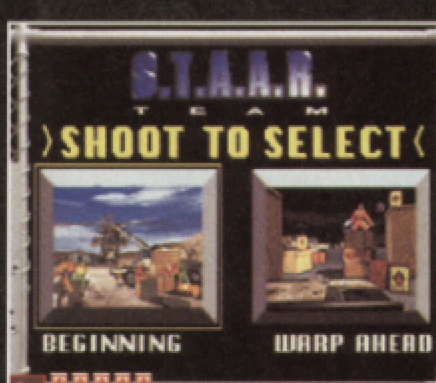




LOGIC PATHS



In common with most target-shooters, Area 51 is constructed from a number of scenes, with the player taking a predetermined path through the landscape. In contrast to Virtua Cop's polygon visuals, Area 51 uses pre-rendered CG (Computer Graphics). The same rendering, in fact, as the arcade version. The enemies are layered over this as sprites, so they can be removed when shot. The drawbacks are that the game is the same every time, and Tantalus have obviously been unable to run the pre-rendered footage across the full-screen size with the Saturn's CD speed. They've tried to disguise a significant border with a tasteful fence arrangement. It doesn't really have an impact on the gameplay, but reminds this reviewer of playing Game Boy games.






SECURE THIS AREA

Area 51 happens as short bursts of intense action in each area of the base, with a brief summary of level performance before penetrating deeper. Here's we go!

PERIMETER
The periphery of alien activity is a gentle introduction. For some reason a helicopter attacks you — these aliens must have versatile aviation skills.

HANGER
Simply make it across the floor of the hanger, using service vehicles where necessary. Climb a ladder to the office level, where aliens use cover more effectively.

ADMINISTRATION BLOCK
Situation tightening as alien scum confront you on every corner. A new breed of close-up alien marines begin stalking you.

BASE
The amount of hi-tech equipment in this area provides perfect cover for the invaders, and make it harder to pick out individual targets.

TARMAC
Not so tough in terms of alien opposition, but a high speed point-grabbing test of reflexes before you take a ride on a passing chopper.





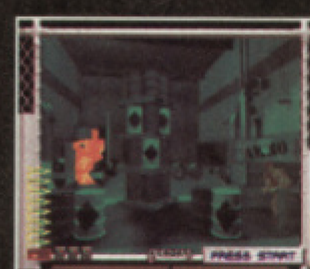





STARR TEST

Throughout your raid, you have to consider your fellow STARR team. They trust you not to shoot them in the butt when they cross your path, though it's often difficult to distinguish in the heat of battle.

KRONN HUNTERS
If you deliberately hit three troopers early on, while avoiding the aliens, a special cheat mode is activated, turning you into a Kronn Hunter (an alien, basically). The screen turns green, but the game remains the same. But now targets glow eerily, and the intensity of the glow tells you how dangerous they are.



HOWD'Y PARTNER

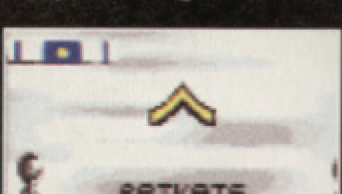


There's a dual play option for Virtua Gun or controller, and full calibration facilities. The cowboy option is a neat extra, allowing a single player to use two guns at once!



BUNCH OF RANKERS

Stripes will be pinned to you with respect to your performance. One way to rack up serious points is to go for a 'streak'. These count the number of consecutive targets hit without missing a shot. Big streaks make it to the high-score table.





comment



GUS

From the Internet it would seem America, the home of gaming bad taste, is creaming itself over this release. It escapes me, as this was one of the most pedestrian arcade games for the last few years, technically and content-wise. The job Tantalus have made of it is not that bad, apart from the screen borders, which really encroach on the action. You just can't expect to recreate rendered footage at arcade quality on a Saturn, and most of the time it feels like you're interacting with a glorified FMV intro. Not that the action is dire, it's immediate entertainment, but superficial and short-lived. There are just too many other AAA titles out there for this to be worth the candle.

comment



STEVE

I think this X-Files fuelled craving for all things paranormal and/or alien related may have gone a little too far, if Area 51 is anything to go by. It supports the Virtua Gun, which is good, but it's also not much cop, which is bad. I think the main problem here is the severe dodginess of the enemy sprites. The pre-rendered coin-op backgrounds are nicely done, although the play window is a bit on the small side, but the bad guys are uninspired, badly animated sprites that goosestep jerkily across the screen. The sound is a bit rough too, with effects that will have you reaching for the mute button on your TV within minutes. Okay so Area 51 isn't a complete bucket of offal (the arcade game was okay), but it's hardly a shining example of the Saturn's power either. Quite frankly you'd be mad if you bought this instead of Virtua Cop 2.

scores

GRAPHICS If you're the kind of person who thinks FMV intros are never long enough, here's a decent half-an-hour of whizz bangs and slightly grainy effects. Okay alien sprites, though. **73**

SOUND When you create a gun game, there are two sounds to get right – shots and screams. Area 51 does pretty well on both counts, the other spot effects are dynamic and the music is at least unobtrusive. **81**

PLAYABILITY It's not hard to enjoy a session on Area 51, but as the format and course of the game is inevitably the same every time, it rapidly begins to lose your attention. There isn't the depth of Virtua Cop 2. **77**

LASTABILITY A major failing – the game isn't that long. To compensate, the challenge is tough, but deja vu is one factor that hurts Area 51 in the home which has no bearing on the arcade game. **64**

overall

Not as dire as something like Revolution X, as the design of the scenarios is acceptable. But it's a title that lacks any real impact amongst currently strong releases. **73**

review

Game Name	Blast chamber
Publisher	Activision
Release	December
Price	£44.99
Game Style	Strategy/Action
Import?	✗
Linkplay?	✗
Players	1-4
Control	Joypad
Background	An original 'futuresport' concept game.





Cast your mind back to your formative years. Remember Tag? Well, now imagine it with bombs, spikes, traps and a 3D rotating arena. That'll be Blast Chamber then.

The concept behind Activision's new sports game is players having possession of a glowing sphere, which is a bit like being 'it', except that in Blast Chamber being 'it' is actually a good thing. Unlike Tag, each player has a bomb strapped to their back. While this would liven up the old playground game, it wouldn't do too much for parent/teacher relations. Anyway, the bombs strapped to the players have timers, and when they reach zero, it's chunky salsa time. To avoid detonation, you place the sphere into the 'reactor' that matches your player's colour. This adds time to your counter, but if dropped into a competitor's reactor, precious seconds are deducted from their timer. Of course if this was just played on a flat plain it would get a bit dull. Thank heavens for those wacky 3D rotating arenas of death, then.





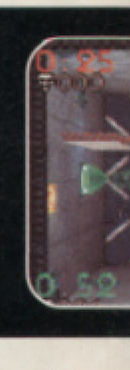


BLAST CHAMBER











WHO CARES WHO WINS?

There are two noticeably different play modes in Blast Chamber. The first is basically a Deathmatch, in which up to four players compete simultaneously in one arena. You have a set amount of time in each chamber, and the winner is the player who was blown up the least number of times. To save yourself a roasting get the ball in your reactor several times, or by dunking it in your opponent's reactors. Draws are decided by the time left on your clock when the main timer runs out. A slight variation to this is the Eliminator setting, where the object is to win by being the last man alive. The action is spiced up by the introduction of spikes, large holes in the ground and elevated reactors.





ON YOUR TOD



The other mode is the Solo Survivor, and pits just one player against an increasingly taxing series of arenas where the common goal is to get the ball into the reactor in order to escape. This section also introduces new hazards in the form of moving and collapsing platforms, spring pads and plasma clouds that cause instant detonation on contact. There are forty Survivor arenas, and to record your progress saves or passwords are available. But so it doesn't get too easy, you are only given a password every five levels or so. Perform especially well, however, and an extra life will be rewarded.

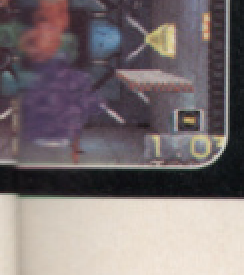
SPIN DRYER

Taking advantage of the cube-like nature of each arena, conspicuous green arrows are littered about the walls which, when pressed, rotate the entire chamber through ninety degrees. As the floor turns into a wall, any players not prepared for this shift tumble to the new ground level, dropping the ball if they have possession. Often your reactor will initially be on the ceiling, and to rack up extra seconds you're going to need to get it round to the floor. In the one player survivor game, rotating the arena forms the basis for many a fiendish puzzle. Spinning the chamber is one of two ways you can wrest possession of the ball from your opponents, the other way is giving them a good old fashioned shove. Who said Tag wasn't violent?

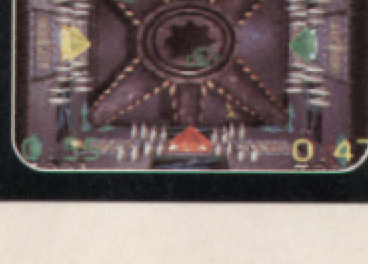












comment



STEVE

Hmm... I wasn't too sure about Blast Chamber to begin with. Was it a good game? Unfortunately for Activision, the answer to this question has to be answered in the negative. You see it's the sluggish gameplay that really lets the game down: as your minuscule, badly animated character stumbles around the arena, you don't always get an instant response to your commands. Add to that the fact that it's often difficult to make out how far into the arena you are and you get a game as equally frustrating as it is pointless. The design of some of the Survivor levels is ingenious but on the whole I'm underwhelmed.

comment



GUS

For a game that relies on a strict time limit, and a limited playing area, precision control is a vital pre-requisite. And it's the lack of that quality of control that leads to Blast Chamber's cold reception. Your player stumbles around, making the battle for the crystal an ugly tussle. As a solo game I don't think it really works at all, as you just find yourself staring at four walls with some minor embellishments as you progress. There is the germ of an idea in the multi-player game, and it does approach being something of a grin when the full complement of players are involved, but it's likely you would want to skip the more complex chambers in this mode, as the features tend to get in the way of the action. What's left is basic, basic, basic.

scores

GRAPHICS The chambers look okay, but the player sprites are tiny and badly animated. The explosion effects are more like coloured mist, but on the whole the game has a passable 'industrial' feel to it. **68**

SOUND Nondescript ambient music tinkers away in the background. The rotating effect is good but most of the other effects are of suspect quality. Especially the jump effect that sounds like Homer Simpson. Doh! **76**

PLAYABILITY The main letdown is that your man can be a bit sluggish to respond to your commands, which is a pain when precision leaps are required. It's also tricky to judge how far 'in' to the screen you are at times. **75**

LASTABILITY Well there is a four player mode, but I can't see four of you hunched around the screen staring at tiny, jerky characters for too long. Blast Chamber is too weird to have the long term appeal of a conventional sports game. **71**

overall

Blast Chamber isn't the most fantastic concept ever devised, and it's been poorly implemented. Dodgy sprites, repetitive gameplay and sluggish controls. **67**

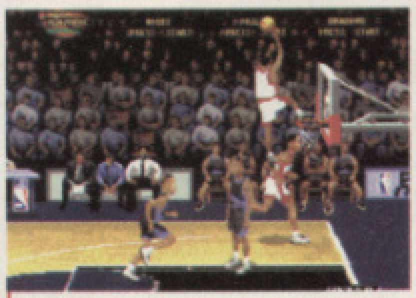
review

Game Name	NBA Hangtime
Publisher	THQ
Release	February — Price £39.99
Game Style	Strategy/ Action
Import? ✕	Linkplay? ✕ — Players 1-4
Control	Joypad
Background	This is the latest game in the Williams NBA Jam series.

It would seem that the Megadrive-owning world just can't get enough of these pesky basketball games. Why look, here's another one to help satisfy their insatiable hoop lust.



It must cause some major headaches for the programmers though. You can just picture them sitting round their boardroom table with their pizza and their Diet Coke saying, "Hmm, I wonder how we can make our new basketball game different, so that 'the kids' will want to splash out another forty quid on it?". Saddled with the low power of the Megadrive, the programmers of NBA Hangtime obviously couldn't take the Saturn route of using polygons and FMV, so instead they've decided to just go mad and put sheep's heads and stuff in it!



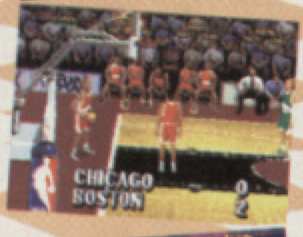
Boomshakalaka! What does that mean exactly? Anyway, the white team are about to score.



















HOOPS OF FURY



NBA Hangtime is a sequel of sorts to the classic NBA Jam, so it features the same whacked-out craziness of the arcade original. Score three baskets in a row with the same player and he is declared 'on fire', which means that he's faster and is more likely to score. A handy smoke trail notifies you of 'on fire' status, which lasts until the other team scores. New features in Hangtime, that offer a progression over Jam, include Double Dunks and Alley-Oops. The Double Dunk is the most spectacular of the two; it involves going for a dunk, then passing the ball to your equally high-flying team-mate at the last second. The Alley-Oop is a little more down to earth, and is performed by passing the ball to your team-mate as he tries for a Super Dunk. Pull off three of these special moves in a row and you achieve Team Fire, which means that both of your players are on fire.



The red player makes a break for the edge of the screen as the green guys leg it up court.



HULA HOOP

Hangtime continues the NBA Jam tradition of having just two-on-two games. While this makes for a clearer court and allows for larger, more detailed players, it does mean that games often follow a pattern of team one scoring, team two scoring, team one scoring, etc. However, having just four tall gents on court means that it is possible to have four human players, each controlling one hoop-meister. This proves to be a right laugh, as you can Double Dunk your opponents into submission.











We conducted tests with Phil and a trampoline, and we have discovered that jumping this high just ain't possible. Scandal!



FREAKY BEASTIES

Fed up with Pippen and Jordan? Well then create your own players. Unlike Electronic Arts' NBA Live '97, Hangtime allows you to go totally over the top and give your hand-crafted dunkers freakish features. Fancy using a sheep's head? Or having a player that looks like Macaulay Culkin? Or a girl? You got it. Each character creation is then assigned a unique PIN number which can be entered at the team select screen so that you can play as your dog-headed alter ego. Now if that isn't scary I don't know what is. You can also set certain attributes, like how well your player takes three point shots and whether the Turbo gauge is hidden from view.



comment



STEVE

I've had it up to here (gestures) with basketball games, so it was with extreme apathy that I approached NBA Hangtime. Surprisingly it wasn't as dull as I was expecting. The player sprites are surprisingly large and well-animated for a Megadrive game, and the nutso create-a-character options add a bit of originality and excitement. In fact some of the abnormal heads you can select verge on the freakish: a chicken headed Michael Jordan anyone? Then you realise that it's just two-on-two action, and most games seem to involve the teams simply taking turns to score. However, coming from the NBA Jam people, there are a lot of 'zany' features like the Double Dunks, hidden characters and stuff and thankfully NBA Hangtime manages to sweep the floor with its 16 bit opposition.

comment



PHIL

Unlike Steve, I've been a fan of basketball games for ages. I've been a loyal follower of the NBA Jam series, and Hangtime. Acclaim's latest offering, has got all the tweaks you could ever want, such as Alley-Oops and a nifty code system that stores your personal data. However, there aren't enough new features here to justify a forty quid game. The new dunks are awesome and the option to create your own players is a neat idea but if you have Jam T.E then there's not that much variation. However, if by any chance none of these games are in your current Megadrive library then you should go out and buy NBA Hangtime as this title is a solid slam dunker!





scores

GRAPHICS Large, well-animated players run around detailed courts, of which there are different designs for each team. The game is also well-presented, with decent photos of all the players. **87**

SOUND Hangtime has a lot of speech, mostly of surprisingly good quality. You also get trainers squeaking on the wooden courts and so forth. The music is, as ever, excruciatingly cheesy. **85**

PLAYABILITY Easy to get into, but you'll need to put in some practice to perfect the special moves. Because you can't have 'proper' games, the action may be too simplistic for someone expecting an accurate simulation. **86**

LASTABILITY The four player mode and potential for character creation hilarity count in Hangtime's favour, but the sparse on-court action and simplistic gameplay means it won't be glued in your Megadrive for long periods of time. **72**

overall

Hangtime is the best basketball game we've seen for a while. It provides a genuine update over NBA Jam TE, but the two-on-two action isn't perfect. **85**

review

Game Name	Toshinden URA
Publisher	Sega
Release	February · Price £44.99
Game Style	Beat-'em-up
Import? ✗	Linkplay? ✗ · Players 1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	Semi-sequel to Takara's last dismal 3D beat-em-up.

Wow! It's another 32 bit beat-'em-up, it's 3D and it's completely awful. So just why are is Sega getting its hands dirty with this second rate import title? We want answers!



On paper, at least, Toshinden URA sounds like a fighting game fans idea of heaven. Texture-mapped 3D characters, 30fps action, completely over-the-top special moves, hidden fighters and the fact that the whole game runs in the Saturn's high resolution mode should be enough to guarantee a healthy score at best. Unfortunately, as with its predecessor, Toshinden URA is incredibly slow and unresponsive, two factors vital to the success of any half decent beat-'em-up, with a line-up of unimaginative characters, dismal moves and glitching graphics. With the likes of Virtua Fighter 2, Fighting Vipers and Street Fighter Alpha 2 dominating this market, it's hard to see just why Sega would be interested in distributing such a lame title. Maybe their Takara pals have a few future surprise releases up their sleeves and Sega don't want to rock the boat by telling them to steer clear of shallow beat-'em-ups?





TOSHINDEN URA

CONCEALED COMBATANTS

Toshinden URA initially only offers 11 selectable characters, there are a further four hidden fighters to find. Gone is the mysterious Cupido from Toshinden Remix but making an appearance from the PlayStation version of Toshinden 2 are Sho and Vermilion. Sho is the mentor of Eiji and Kayin boasting lightning fast attacks and a double fireball. Armed with both pistol and shotgun, Vermilion is a nasty piece of work and capable of causing plenty of damage to an unsuspecting opponent. We printed the cheats to access these secret characters in last month's Mean 16.

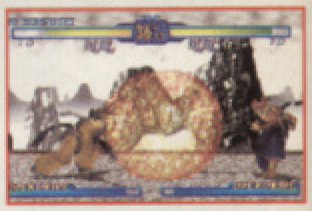


METER MADE

Similar to the Super Meters in SFA 2, Toshinden URA employs an Overdrive Gauge allowing players to unleash devastating energy-sapping moves. As fighters initiate attacks this bar begins to fill up. Once fully powered-up, players are then required to perform a ridiculously complicated Joypad/button combination to activate their characters spectacular finishing move.







scores

GRAPHICS	72
SOUND	67
PLAYABILITY	65
LASTABILITY	68

overall

Highly unlikely to knock Virtua Fighter 2 of its pedestal. Possibly the worst 3D beat 'em-up on the Saturn although Toshinden 3 is on the way. Whoopee...

62

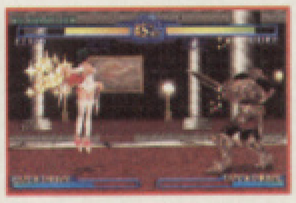
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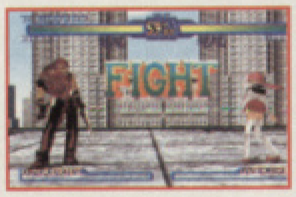


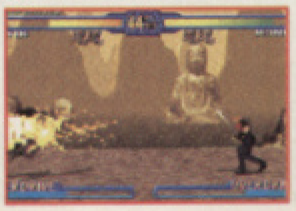
GUS

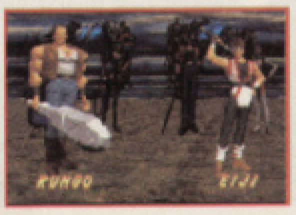
No no no, make it stop! Toshinden was fairly impressive two years ago when the 32 bit consoles were launched, but today it just doesn't cut mustard. If anything, Toshinden URA looks worse than the previous versions, with blocky, amateurish missile attacks, dull backgrounds and unconvincing animation. There are a handful of hidden characters and plenty of OTT special moves, but quite frankly who gives a toss? Takara can pack in extra features until the cows come home but with naff, uninspired gameplay like this it makes not one iota of difference. I tremble with anticipation at the prospect of Toshinden 3.











comment



MATT

Blimey Sega, how did this one slip through the net? Do the words "quality control" mean anything to you? Seriously though, Toshinden URA should never have been given the PAL conversion treatment so unfortunately it now has to suffer the full MEAN MACHINES wrath. I'll make it short and sweet: glaringly obvious black borders, slow Joypad response, graphical glitches from hell and loading times that make you glad you own a Megadrive. At its best Toshinden URA is a mediocre beat-'em-up lacking any of the vital features required to make a fighting game stand out in an already overcrowded genre. So there.

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PREVIEWS

This month's preview section was saved from pedestrianism by EA and Soviet Strike, which has come on a lot quicker than they thought. Plus, Sonic's dubious antics on Saturn, and more news on Supercar – the ONLY coin-op that matters.

preview

Game Name	Sonic 3D
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Travellers Tales
Release	January '97

SONIC 3D



Megadrive owners should definitely have been celebrating a blue Christmas this year. Sonic 3D is the finest 16 bit title for many a month but Sega are also beavering away on a Saturn version of the game titled Sonic 3D Blast in the US.

Hopefully this cracking post-Christmas present should satisfy Saturn owners desperate for a speedy Sonic fix. In issue 49 we reviewed the incredible Sonic 3D on the Megadrive and were so gob-smacked that we gave it our immediate blessing and a not-too shabby score of 92%. The good news is that everyone's favourite blue spiky mammal has nipped back to the drawing board, been given a lick of paint and is nearly ready to make the logical leap from 16 bit to 32 bit. Developer Travellers Tales have taken their successful Sonic 3D gameplay engine and added a variety of all-new graphical enhancements including loads of background animation, clever weather effects and more visual treats.

Sonic 3D places the heroic hedgehog within the isometric environs of Flicky's Island, consisting of six zones from the twisted imagination of Dr. Robotnik. The cute little birds of the isle have been turned into Badniks and Sonic has to free them and lead them to safety. It's more of a maze than a platform game.



After Sonic Extreme was canned we thought we'd never see a polygon Sonic gracing the Saturn. Boy, were we wrong!

TALES TO ASTONISH!

So just who the heck are Travellers Tales and how come Sega has allowed them to tamper with one of the major cultural icons of the decade? Well, the reason why Sonic Team weren't involved with Sonic 3D's creation can be summed up in one word: NiGHTS. Yep, Yuji Naka and his talented team had to temporarily hand over their most famous creation whilst the mammoth NiGHTS project was being completed. Fortunately, Travellers Tales were offered the chance to produce their own Sonic game under the watchful eye of Sega. You might think that the name is unfamiliar but Travellers Tales have already produced the likes of Puggsy and the amazing movie tie-in hit, Toy Story, so quality and spot-on playability are two things they're more than familiar with.





ARCADIA

Welcome to Arcadia, MEAN MACHINES SEGA's very own up-to-the-minute coin-op section. If you're looking for the latest, accurate information on state-of-the-art arcade machines then you've come to the right place. This month we bring you a sumptuous selection of cracking coin-ops from bizarre Japanese action adventures to next generation arcade hardware, Arcadia's got the lot!









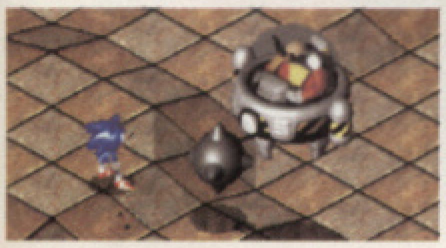


SONIC: THE MOVIE

The Megadrive game also includes a FMV rendered intro sequence. Watching a fully animated Sonic in motion is absolutely breathtaking! The Saturn has often been letdown in the past by poor quality FMV but Sega is now utilising a new digital compression system giving Saturn 'mini-movies' a smooth and slick look. One major gripe levelled at the 16 bit version of Sonic 3D was that upon completing the entire game, players were only rewarded with brief endings. We're informed the Saturn game includes rendered endings to watch, depending on how many Chaos Emeralds players manage to secure.







BONUS BONANZA

The most exciting aspect of Sonic 3D is the addition of new bonus levels programmed by the fabled Sonic Team themselves! Being the generous folk they are, Yuji Naka's team agreed to produce seven bonus stage sections for inclusion in the Saturn game. In these short levels players race into the screen through a maze of twisting, dipping tubes. Similar in appearance to the bonus stages in Sonic 2, these extra levels require players to collect a set number of rings whilst dodging all manner of nasty hazards. Your reward for negotiating each stage is not only a shiny Chaos Emerald but also the opportunity to watch a 3D polygonised Sonic in motion.



SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2 TURBO

As you read this we'll have received our very own copy of Capcom's stunning new puzzle game but unfortunately it will have arrived too late for an in-depth review this month. Ah, such is the topsy turvy world of magazine publishing kids. Anyhow, Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo looks like being a highly addictive one and two player game combining elements of such classic titles as Tetris and Street Fighter. Most of you will no doubt have played Baku Baku Animal, Columns or any one of a number of block-based puzzle games but SPF2T is slightly different.



preview

Game Name	Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo
Publisher	Capcom
Developer	Capcom
Release	December (Japan)



CUTE CAPCOM

Capcom has taken this proven puzzle concept and added a handful of super deformed Street Fighter and Night Warriors characters in an effort to gave its own version a unique and original slant. The selling point here is that each fighter has his/her own pattern of blocks that, when lined up correctly, trigger animations from the mini characters battling away in the centre of the screen. In fact with skill, and a bit of luck, players can pull off Super Finishing moves complete with blue shadow trails! You can select from Ryu, Chun Li, Sakura, Ken, Morrigan, Lei Lei, Donovan and Felicia with the addition of two hidden fighters, Gouki (Akuma) and newcomer Devilot. We'll have a full review of SPF2T in the next issue of MEAN MACHINES SEGA.



SUPERCAR

DEVELOPER: AM2/SEGA

Currently being developed by the original AM2 team behind both Virtua Racing and Daytona USA, this awesome arcade racer utilises the same Model 3 hardware board that powers Virtua Fighter 3. We've only seen still screenshots so far but the actual game itself is said to be an incredibly realistic driving experience by those who have seen it running. Supercar is actually based on the International GT Endurance Race and so features real locations as well as four existing performance vehicles – the Ferrari F40, Maclaren F1, Porsche 91-GT2 and the Dodge Viper. Skid-marks on courses and angled vehicles hint at major power-slides and superb handling but we'll know more about this stunning coin-op's features when we test drive Supercar next month!













preview

Game Name	Krazy Ivan
Publisher	Psygnosis
Developer	Psygnosis
Release	January

KRAZY IVAN





Amongst the initial crop of PlayStation games to surface when the UK machine debuted last year was Psygnosis' post-Cold War mechanoid shoot-'em-up, Krazy Ivan. Although possibly the weakest game in the Liverpool based software house's line-up (hey, we're not forgetting Discworld you know!), Krazy Ivan did feature some impressive visuals interspersed with humorous FMV cut scenes. However, the gameplay was a bit on the easy side and players often romped through KI's explosive levels in record time. Saturn owners can finally find out what all the fuss was about as Psygnosis is currently overhauling its chaotic communist champion in time for an early January release.

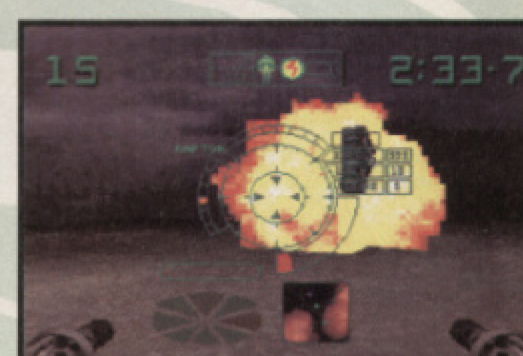












GLOBE TROTTING

Set across five international locations, Krazy Ivan gives players the opportunity to strap themselves into a towering, multi-ton mecha robot and take on a mission to save the planet from hostile alien invaders. These space-born bad guys also pilot lethal armoured walking arsenals and must be defeated before players can move onto the next occupied territory. According to the in-game FMV sequences, Ivan is actually a psychotic human who has been roped into piloting the title's synthetic star. Although trained and supervised by a Russian tech team, Ivan decides to go AWOL and tackle ET by his own rules. Thrust into a scrolling 3D world, Ivan needs to use all his piloting skills and cunning if the Earth is to be saved. If you're a fan of Core's Shellshock or even first person shoot-'em-ups like Doom then Krazy Ivan should definitely be right up your street. Players roam each overrun territory, tackling a variety of tricky scum with such powerful weapons as Plasma Cannons, missiles, lasers and Vortex Bombs. The real challenge arrives in the form of five fearsome ferrous foes.

ARCADIA

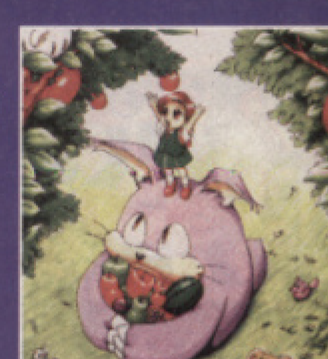




WAKU WAKU 7

DEVELOPER: SUN SOFT

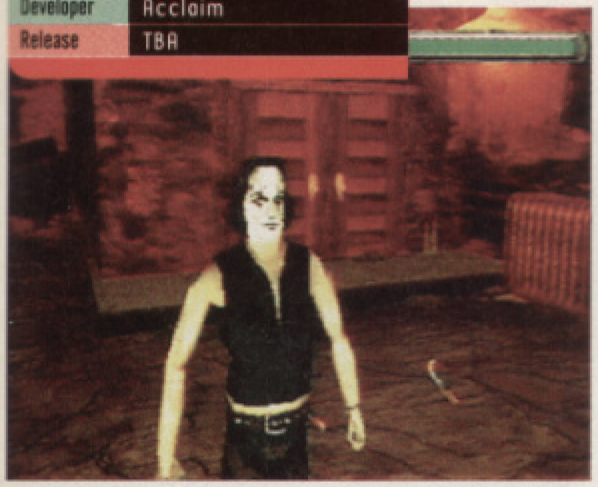
Sun Soft has been quiet of late. However, that's all about to change with the release of the coin-op, Waku Waku 7. According to our mates on C&VG, Waku Waku translates as "a Japanese word which describes the feeling of your heart beating fast because of excitement." Er... exactly. Essentially this is a colourful beat-'em-up but the addition of a Waku Waku Gauge (used to power-up a player's attacks, activate guard breaks and initiate Super Mode) makes this more than your average fighting game. Expect massive cartoony characters, stunning special moves and loads of laughs when Waku Waku 7 arrives in the UK in early '97.



preview

Game Name	The Crow: City of Angels
Publisher	Acclaim
Developer	Acclaim
Release	TBA

THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS





Although the recently released movie The Crow: City of Angels failed to generate as large a cult audience as the original film, Acclaim is still putting the final touches to a forthcoming scrolling beat-'em-up tie-in. This dark sequel takes place a few years after the first film and focuses on another innocent man who has his life forever altered by violence and becomes the revenge-driven vigilante known as The Crow. The game follows the plot of the movie closely enough as players guide the gothic hero around a series of grimy, shadowy city streets in search of the local criminal element. Justice is then dispensed by unleashing various kicks and punches or by utilising weaponry scattered around each stage. Only be defeating all his enemies can The Crow rest in peace.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW

The Crow uses a combination of scrolling backgrounds, 3D characters and dramatic camera angles for battle scenes. The effect is reminiscent of both quick cut movie scenes and Capcom's stunning horror-fest Resident Evil. Acclaim's trademark motion capture technology is also in evidence here although neither the film's main star, French actor Vincent Perez, nor any of the movie's actual bad guys make an appearance. As the movie has already flopped in both the UK and US, Acclaim should perhaps now turn its attention to timing the release of The Crow: City of Angels with the video launch in early '97. We'll bring you a full review of The Crow very soon.





SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD





Although in development Hell for what seems like an eternity, Spot Goes to Hollywood is now reaching the final stages of its production and should be available to review any time now. Virgin's own US in-house development team Burst (once Virgin Studios) have been busy working on this 32 bit sequel. The results are impressive so far, kicking off with a lengthy movie pastiche intro that hints at film-based levels to be encountered later on in the game.

preview

Game Name	Spot Goes to Hollywood
Publisher	Virgin
Developer	Virgin
Release	TBA

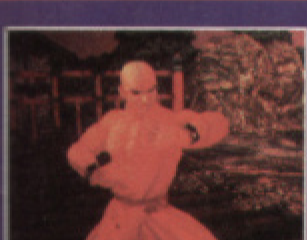


COOL AID

Spot remains firmly rooted in platform game territory although Virgin has opted for an isometric angle requiring players to be more cautious with their movements in each stage. The game requires players to collect spots in each level before they're warped on to the next devious movie setting. You'll instantly recognise some of the levels in Spot Goes to Hollywood as they've obviously been 'borrowed' from such classic films as Star Wars, Jurassic Park and The Terminator. Assuming the mixture of madcap platform action, detailed animation and tongue-in-cheek is just right Virgin should have a big hit on its hands when Spot arrives in early '97.



COBRA



DEVELOPER: KONAMI

Konami's new Cobra arcade board is already strutting its funky stuff inside the recently released driving game, GTI Club: Rally Cote D'Azur. However, 'Cobra' is also the name of an as yet unfinished 3D fighting game currently being completed by the Japanese developer. From the few screenshots we've seen the game appears to be as visually impressive as Virtua Fighter 3 and indeed Konami claims its new hardware easily surpasses Sega's Model 3 board in terms of sheer polygon output. Of course the real proof will be in the playtesting but so far the results are encouraging to say the least.

Cobra Performance: 1-5 million polygons/sec, 50-250 million pixels/sec.

Resolution: 640 x 400 pixels, 144 Bits/pixel frame buffer, 256 level alpha blending.



Crow Director Tim Pope also makes videos for The Cure!

preview

Game Name	Soviet Strike
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Tiburon
Release	Febuary '97

SOVIET



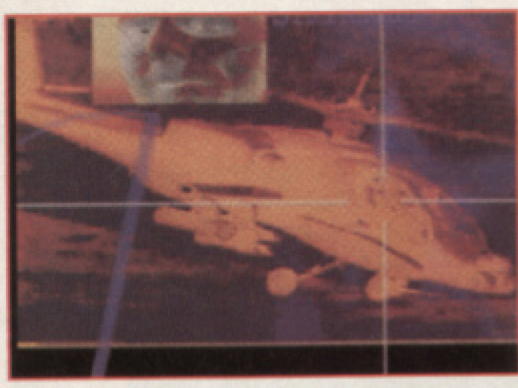
With software companies rushing to release as many top Christmas titles as possible, you'd be mistaken for thinking that the New Year might be something of a barren wasteland as far as quality Saturn games go. Well think again, pal! Still riding high on the success of both Die Hard Trilogy and Madden '97, Electronic Arts is set to deliver yet another two pronged 32 bit attack with FIFA '97 and Soviet Strike being prepped as major first-quarter launches. As this issue was going to press we were fortunate enough to receive a virtually finished copy of Soviet Strike which we originally covered way back in issue 47. Since then the game has been improved no end proving EA's commitment to both fans of the series and to Saturn owners in general. The finished game should hit shops in February and receive a major marketing push that will include towering billboard posters and a full-scale TV assault. Believe us when we say that Soviet Strike is gonna be massive!

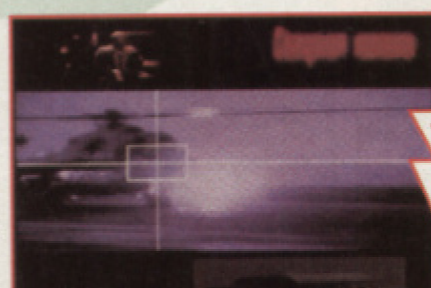


HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF...

For those of you unfamiliar with the 16 bit 'Strike series, this latest incarnation basically follows the tried-and-tested formula of its predecessors although the leap to a next generation console has obviously provided wider scope in terms of both visual appeal and gameplay. Set against a backdrop of political unrest within the former Soviet Union, the game follows a covert military team sent to stop a Communist madman attempting to restore the nation to its former glory. Players are required to tackle five dangerous missions utilising the latest in high-tech aerial assault craft (a customised Apache assault helicopter). Mission objectives range from locating missing team operatives to crippling enemy forces by destroying communication installations. Armed with heat-seeking rockets, Hellfire missiles and powerful Chaingun cannons, pilots will face Russian rebels and the challenge of bringing down the one man who could start a Third World War.



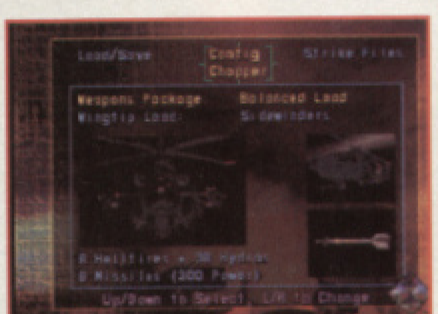










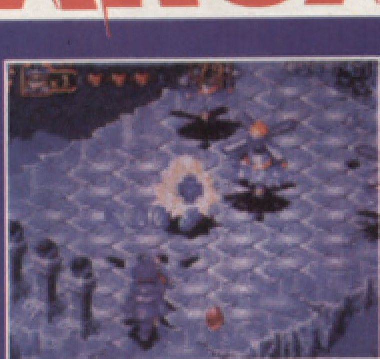


ARCADIA

PRINCESS CLUB: BIG OPERATION

DEVELOPER: ATLUS

Diagonally scrolling action games have been a little thin on the ground of late. Climax has managed to change all that with the fantastic Dark Savior but they're not the only ones to realise there's a lack of this almost 16 bit style of gameplay. Princess Club: Big Operation features three lively characters, Kurara, Kirara who battle their way through various Technicolour stages fighting a variety of bizarre creatures and bosses that often fill the screen. Amazing special effects, two player mayhem and cute tunes make this one arcade game worth hunting down. The Saturn version is out almost concurrently in Japan, so we should be able to bring you that next month.







STRIKE





SEARCH AND DESTROY

Florida based developers Tiburon have now completed the lengthy Saturn conversion process and the final results are mightily impressive indeed. As with any Electronic Arts title, presentation is a major factor in the game with FMV sequences linking missions and movie-quality intro footage setting the scene for the chaos that soon ensues. During each mission players are kept up-to-date with intelligence reports digitally decoded from STRIKE-net, the team's very own state-of-the-art information retrieval network. The in-game level designs in Soviet Strike are actually constructed from topographical maps and satellite photographs of a real life locations with players flying their helicopters over amazingly realistic terrain in search of their next target. As well as the classic 'Strike isometric playing angle, EA has added a few other viewpoints, such as a behind the helicopter angle, which not only gives players more visual options but also now enables concealed targets to be located with relative ease.







RED OR DEAD?

Fretting fans of the series need not worry that their favourite chopper action game has been altered beyond all recognition. Indeed, Soviet Strike looks set to become a worthy successor to its predecessors as it appears to have retained the standard of gameplay that made the originals legendary 16-bit titles. Megadrive owners will readily admit that the 'Strike games were rock-hard in their day and with so many current titles offering little lastabilty this is one game that should give action junkies a level of challenge previously unseen. Whether the combination of slick visuals, smooth FMV, shrapnel-shredding sound effects and explosive action will be enough to satisfy Saturn owners is a question we'll be answering in the our full Soviet Strike review next month.



















Keep an eye out for Reds under the bed!



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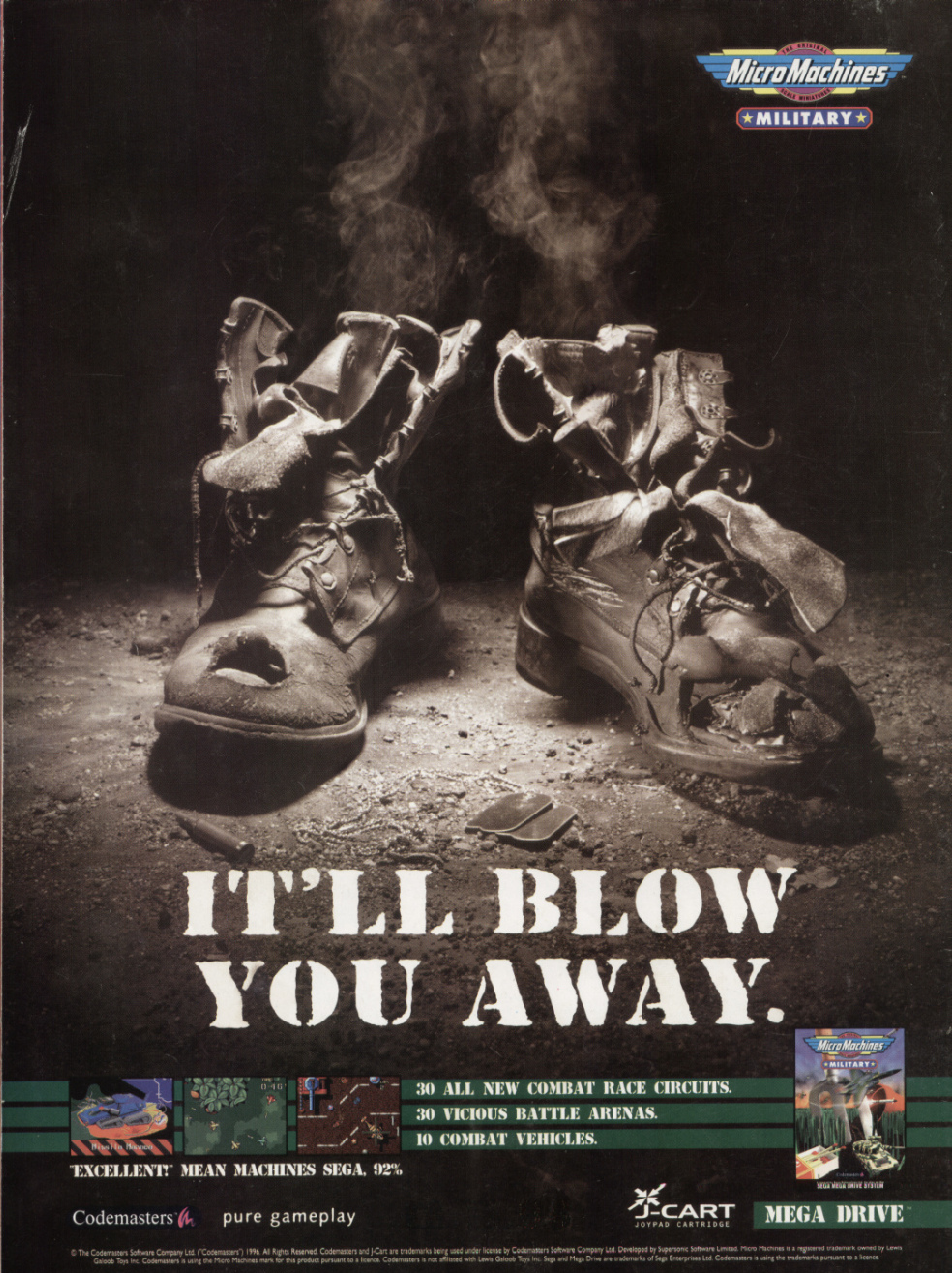
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